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THE HARVEST OF THE RIVER

AND OTHER SERMONS

BY

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LONDON

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TO
MY WIFE

Printed in Great Britain

PREFACE

This volume of sermons is an outcome of a ministry in various parts of London, and in the north and in the extreme west of England. It has been difficult amid the pressure of heavy work, which has been a feature common to these very different fields of service, to devote adequate time to study. At the same time this pressure may have contributed to the message an element of reality which circumstances of comparative ease and leisure might have caused it to lack.

Most of the sermons are of recent date, though a few date from the years of the War. Several are of local import, but they may possess more than temporary interest. Such are the sermons preached at the dedication of the memorial to William Wriothesley Wingfield, Vicar of Gulval for nearly seventy-four years ; at the first Ordination held by the first Bishop of Chelmsford ; at Newcastle Cathedral before the Lord Mayor and Corporation and the Northumberland Fusiliers a few months before the War ; and at the Jubilee of Truro Cathedral a few weeks ago. The other sermons have been preached at St. Paul's

Cathedral; Southwark Cathedral; Westminster Abbey; the Temple Church; Liverpool Cathedral; Newcastle Cathedral; Norwich Cathedral; Bishops' College, Cheshunt; Newcastle-upon-Tyne; and in London-over-the-Border.

The sermons do not cover the whole area of the Christian message, even so far as I have tried to understand and to interpret it, but I hope that they exhibit evidence of a desire to preach Christ and to keep the Cross in the centre of my ministry.

J. T. Barking.

The Walnuts,
Walthamstow, E.17.
18*th July*, 1930.

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I

THE HARVEST OF THE RIVER

"The Harvest of the River."
Isaiah xxiii. 3.

Our thoughts to-day go very much to country life. We have crowded into the towns, reversing the proportion between the population of town and country, but we still love the country.

Our Harvest Thanksgivings are popular in town parishes, as they seem to recall us to scenes of village life, but we take a wider view of the Harvest than to connect it solely with the harvest of our own fields. Were we to depend on that alone, we could not exist as a nation for long together. For seven-eighths of our supply of corn we depend on the harvest from overseas.

It was so with Tyre in the days of the prophet Isaiah. Tyre was one of the great cities of the East, belonging to the Gentile world, yet so near to Israel that its fortunes closely affected God's ancient people. Isaiah links Tyre with Egypt, though they were so far apart. The reason was that the Phœnicians were cut off from the interior of Syria and could not draw from it their food supplies. They

came to depend on Egypt and drew their revenues from their carrying trade. The expression "the harvest of the river," meant on the lips of Isaiah the harvest of the Nile, which was brought to Tyre to feed the inhabitants of that great city.

In the case of Egypt the expression was literally true. The Nile took the place in Egypt of the rainfall in our own land. Everything depended for the harvest on the overflow of the Nile and the irrigation of the country round. Though that condition of things no longer obtains, the phrase "the harvest of the river" is perfectly intelligible to us in another connection. Right back in our own commercial history of the early and middle ages rivers were of great importance. Till good roads were made, carriage by water was less troublesome and less expensive than carriage by land. The Thames and the Severn were of primary importance in the development of British trade. In Domesday Book, London, Bristol, Southampton and Norwich figured as towns of great importance, owing their development largely to the rivers or other waterways which connected them with the high seas. It is obvious at the present day how all-important to many of our great towns is their position on some river. In this city the harvest of the river is an expression whose meaning strikes home at once.

We are justly proud of our river, for the prosperity of our city is largely bound up with the river

on which it stands. Its ancient name attests the fact that the bridge across the Tyne was a conspicuous factor in the town's importance. Yet even after the new castle built in the days of William Rufus gave the city a new name, the Tyne was not for centuries to come to acquire the importance which it possesses now. It is only within the last few generations that the river has yielded us the abundant harvest which we reap from it to-day. As we pass down its course we notice both banks of the Tyne studded with hives of industry. The clank of the riveters ; the sound of buzzers, sirens, whistles ; the smoke from hundreds of chimneys betoken the importance of the river to the population on Tyneside.

Why should I dwell on so familiar a topic—one which is a pride or a commonplace to the average inhabitant ? I do so to remind you of the fact that we owe our importance largely to the improvement which we have made in our natural resources. Like the Clyde, the Tyne would never have been what it is but for the work of modern engineering in deepening its channels. Most of us probably hardly realize how great an alteration has been made in the character of the river by the dredging of its channel.

The very word " harvest " implies labour. Not many harvests of material value are reaped without much labour. " In due time we shall reap, if we faint not." It is an obvious lesson, yet one which we

often overlook, that we can do much for ourselves in life by the improvement of our natural resources. So many people plead inability to achieve greater results than they show, when it is indolence, not incapacity, which is really at fault. "My leanness, my leanness," cried Israel to the prophet in old days, when the cry ought really to have been, "My laziness, my laziness." Never did the nation stand in greater need of the utmost exertion for the very best use of the powers of its citizens than it does to-day.

We need to be the very best and to do the very most we can in our country's service. Such are some of the lessons of efficiency which the thought of the Harvest of the River teaches us. But in thinking of the full development and the full use of our natural powers we must not lose sight of the spiritual. My purpose in speaking to you to-night—and I make no apology for pressing the point—is to bring home to you the great need of being made anew if we are to be all that we ought to be: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God."

"The Harvest of the River."—Come to another river, where the noise of the foundry is not to be heard. Silently and softly the river flows, winding amid luxuriant meadows or along a lovely valley. We come upon the ruins of some fair abbey, and we reconstruct in our mind the scenes of four hun-

dred years ago, when the buildings were peopled with monks and the sound of praise and prayer scarcely ceased by day or night.

The first thought which occurs to us may be that the builders of those glorious temples knew how to find a spot of beauty and comfort for their home of retirement from the world, or that the monks knew where best to reap the harvest of the river for their weekly fast. Yet there is a deeper lesson for us here. Whatever their faults of belief or of conduct, the builders of those abbeys knew the value of the contemplative life. Meditation—its meaning and its use are so little known to-day—was aided by surroundings which seemed to speak of Heaven. That was the true harvest which the placid river yielded to those who set their home of worship on its banks. We need to find a place and a time for meditation in these hurrying lives of ours. In God's quiet strength alone can we grow strong. If we give ourselves no time for that Divine strength to flow into our soul, to pulsate right through our being, we cannot expect our spiritual life to be healthy and strong.

We think of that riverside at Philippi in apostolic days, and of the little band of seekers after God who met there to pray. The harvest of that river was one of the richest yields that the history of God's field has seen. "On the Sabbath we went out of the city by a river-side, where prayer was wont to

be made ; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither." The men appear to have been conspicuous by their absence from worship, as they often are to-day. Still the work of God must go on, and if the men will not come forward to do it, the women will not fail us. But how much more might be done, if the men of the city would come out to prayer on the Sabbath-day and take their share in working for the Kingdom of God. Then we might see the history of Philippi repeated, and that without the evangelists of to-day having to go to prison in the attempt.

We might then see some sons of the river coming forth in the noble enterprise of spreading the Kingdom of God. You remember Charles Kingsley's "*Water Babies.*" Arthur Benson thinks that no book "so interprets the spirit and the essential mystery of moving water, alike the streamlet, the full-flushed, travel-stained river, and the pure, vast, cavernous sea, with its sapphire spaces and the fallen light of its depths." He is disappointed, however, that the child of the stream and the sea, "who had played with water-babies in the silver sand, in the weed-hung caverns of Brandan's Isle, who had darted down the river in flood among the gleaming salmon, should go back to the world and become an engineer," dealing with railways, engines and rifled guns. "Not this the promise of his prime." But was this so disappointing a sequel ? Was it not well

that the engineer should have been a son of the river? It was well that the man who was to do useful, practical work should have "come smiling out of the golden gates of imagination into the severe daylight of the world." (*Leaves of the Tree*, pages 239, 240.) If we can send out as engineers, to do the practical work of the world, men who are sons of the river, men who in their youth have seen a vision of God, men whose eyes have been opened to see the beauty of holiness, then we need not regret the prosaic character of their tasks. We ought rather to rejoice that those who go forth to do the rough and ready work of the world should be children of the river of God, trained in habits of meditation and of prayer.

There is another river which yields a rich harvest. The angel in the Revelation, says St. John, "shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the Throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Archbishop Benson thought of this verse when he travelled in Italy and looked upon the rivers flowing from the snow-clad Alps. He wrote: "When the water of life is said to flow from the Throne of God and the Lamb, it clearly makes the Throne a mountain-throne—

a great white throne indeed." (*Life*, Volume II, page 406.)

The harvest of that river is one which we might almost despair of reaping to-day. We think of the nations of Europe, wounded, stricken and sore. Is there any cure for human woes? Yes—the leaves of that tree were for the healing of the nations—a rich harvest and one terribly needed to-day.

How can we reap that harvest? The Lord Jesus is the source of that river of life, in His dazzling purity. From Him comes that river whose harvest-yield alone can heal the nations. If we are to reap the harvest of meditation, the harvest of worship, the harvest of truth, the harvest of national healing, we can best do so by coming into close touch with Christ. If we do, we shall find fulfilment of a vision of Ezekiel—"Everything shall live whither the river cometh" (xlvii. 9).

II

THE PURPOSE OF CHRIST

" This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners ; of whom I am chief."—1 *Timothy* i. 15.

THOMAS CARLYLE is reported to have said that human beings were mostly fools. St. Paul said that all of them were sinners. There may be more in common between the two sayings than would appear at first sight. One of the Psalms suggests the relationship—" The fool hath said in his heart, No God." Not, as our Bible translates it—" There is no God." That would mark down the atheist. The atheist may or may not be a fool, but there is no doubt that the man is a fool who, knowing there is a God, says to himself, No God for me. So the sayings of Carlyle and St. Paul are not so very far apart. Yet there is a great difference between them. Perhaps Carlyle would not have minded if people had called him a fool, but there was a saving clause in his description of men. The word " mostly " gave him a way of escape. He did not consider himself a fool.

St. Paul had a saving clause in his statement too, but it was a very different one. It was this—" Christ

Jesus came into the world to save sinners." This was a sounder way of escape. There was just a chance that a man who stigmatized the majority of his fellow men as fools might be a fool himself. It was not quite certain that he was in the minority who were not fools. But there could be no doubt about St. Paul's way of escape. Suppose he had been a sinner, well—Christ had come to save him. There could be no mistake about that. Does St. Paul exclude himself? No—he includes himself; in fact he goes further—he describes himself as "chief of sinners." "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief."

Is this the reason why St. Paul counts for far more in the world to-day than Carlyle does? Was he an abler man? I am inclined to think that he was. If not, there was so much of God in St. Paul as to give him an outstanding advantage over one of the wisest men of the nineteenth century.

See the difference between the two men. The sage of Chelsea sat on his balcony and looked down on the Londoners as they passed up and down Cheyne Walk. The preacher of Tarsus stepped down among the crowd, and while stating their character in plain terms classed himself with them, "sinners, of whom I am chief." That gave him power. He made himself one of the people. He did not do so in the wrong sense. He did not stoop to their level in the way of lowering himself. He

was never undignified. Nor did his classifying himself in this way produce any sense of unreality among his hearers. No incongruous impression was made on Timothy when he read these words in St. Paul's letter to him. And when St. Paul's hearers heard similar sentiments from him, they did not feel that he was insincere. Some of them thought him a fool, but he was quite willing to be a fool for Christ's sake.

Herein then lay one secret of his power—the realization of what he was in the sight of God—"the chief of sinners."

You will recognise the main part of my text as one of the most familiar passages of Scripture. It is one of the comfortable sayings in our Communion office. The theory of their quotation is that the worshippers have had a sense of sin brought home to them with a view to prepare them to come to the Lord's Table humbly and with words of confession on their lips, giving expression to the sense of sinfulness in their hearts. Then the minister pronounces the Absolution and follows that up with four quotations from Scripture—two sayings of Christ, one of St. Paul and one of St. John—which are calculated to deepen in the communicant the sense of that forgiveness which has just been invoked upon him.

I often feel that two of the quotations are incomplete. In this instance the words "of whom I am

chief" are omitted. In the next quotation the comfort of the Cross as being propitiation for our sins is brought home to us, but the trenchant words which follow in St. John's Epistle are omitted. Would that the Revisers of the Prayer Book might add them. "He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Would the Church be so slow in missionary enterprise if those words formed part of our Communion office? So in the third comfortable saying I could wish that the words of St. Paul had been quoted in full, "that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." The addition would not distract our attention from ourselves to St. Paul. We should not think what a bad man he was, nor on the other hand how he exaggerated his shortcomings, but we should find in the words a vehicle to express our own sense of sin—"of whom I am chief."

St. Paul was not what the world would have called a bad man. He had been brought up very carefully, in fact rather strictly. He had not recoiled from this training—as the world likes to think all strictly brought up boys do—and he had not run riot in frivolity or profligacy. On the other hand he was deeply religious. Wherein then did his sin lie? Did it lie in his persecution of the Christians, brought home to him when he found that his persecution of them was tantamount to persecuting Jesus

Christ Himself? This was a large factor in his sinfulness, no doubt. Yes—when we come to think of it, the ignoring of Christ must be a big factor in the culpability of the man who comes to himself and finds that he has not been what God desired him to be. Our Lord Himself said that when the Holy Spirit came, He would convince the world of sin, because they believed not on Him. That is the crowning sin, to know of Christ and not to believe on Him. There was all that element of agony in St. Paul's case. Still, as well as that there was the acute realization that his life had really been lived for self and that the will of God had not been its controlling factor.

Perhaps a day has come in our life when we have felt thoroughly dissatisfied with life. At least we thought we were, but what we have really been dissatisfied with has been our own life. There is no need to be dissatisfied with life. The wreckage of human hopes which we see around us makes the world with all its grand possibilities, mocking us so often with their very elusiveness, seem such a disappointment. Yet in that very wreckage lies so much of what is splendid and ennobling in human history—the inspiration of those noble examples of men and women who have cared not one whit for life or for self. They have cared only for us, and by their death they have saved us. They have made us feel so ashamed of our littleness and unworthi-

ness. They have stirred in us the desire to be of some use in our day and generation. They have saved us from our old self.

From looking at that wreckage we look back at another scene of human wreckage, where the greatest gift of God to man was desecrated and dishonoured, where the powers of evil seemed at their strongest and foullest. Yet there we see such a sacrifice that the very sight brings us into reconciliation with God. The virtue of the great atonement for sin comes home to us. We see our share in the guilt of the Cross, for it was man that nailed to it the Son of God. We see our share in the blessing that flows from the Cross. And while our guilt in the long ignoring of the Christ comes home to us, we feel shamed by a sense of sin when we see Him, and we feel what we ought to have been. We can understand St. Paul describing himself as chief of sinners. Perhaps we can say it of ourselves. Then we can best appreciate the comfort of those cheering words, " Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." This is the message that men really need to-day. It is " worthy of all men to be received."

The circumstances of the time ought to incline men to accept Christ. For the War is in a sense putting us back into Old Testament times. It is obvious that times of war are more akin to the Old Testament atmosphere than to the New. The spirit of sternness and severity, which breathes through

the Old Testament, is in dark contrast with the spirit of love and mercy, which breathes through the New. Yet those grim old times prepared the way for Christ. How effectively they did so. The tired world, though it crucified its Lord, welcomed Him when He preached to it and drew Him to its heart. Those very men who had seen the Crucifixion and shared its guilt, were stricken with shame eight weeks later at Jerusalem and in their thousands accepted Christ. The message of salvation spread in different directions and a sense of freshness came into life. What philosophy could not effect, Christianity did effect. And those dark times, in which the Gospel message was first made known, were the days in which it made the quickest and the greatest progress it has ever made. Perhaps numerically quicker progress was made, as when the whole people of Kief was baptized at the bidding of Vladimir almost in one day in the River Dnieper. But we have to learn that their being baptized with water promiscuously was not the same as being born again, and that a nation may be baptized in a day without fulfilling the prophecy that a nation shall be born in a day.

What we really wish to see is a widespread acceptance of the message, thanks to the Spirit of God stirring the hearts of men. If these days are like Old Testament days, may they not be also a time of preparation for a new reception of the Christ?

Then the world, tired and weary of war, its dissensions, its destruction, its death, may recline on the breast of Jesus and find rest for its worn-out soul.

If, however, the message is to be received by all men, it rests with someone to pass it on. It rests with us. If we know the good tidings, we must not hold our peace, but we must pass on the message, commending it to others by our life, our conversation and our direct witness to Christ.

Yet we cannot pass on the message till it has taken real hold of our own lives. The sense of sin must be burnt in quite deep. We can never tolerate any system of thought which minimizes sin, which denies its reality, which leaves it out of account, which says that it can be easily got over. No—the sight of the Cross is enough to tell us a different tale. There to-day we take our stand.

> " My faith would lay her hand
> On that dear Head of Thine,
> While like a penitent I stand
> And there confess my sin."

Yes—and " if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

III

THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

"For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him."
2 Corinthians v. 21.

The last Sunday of the Christian year brings to us here the last command of our Blessed Lord. That command was no closing up of our Lord's career, for with Christ the end was always a beginning. The end of His mission on earth was the beginning of a new era of activity for Him and of a new work for His Church. With Him there was no such thing as the end of the world. He spoke not of that, as some suppose erroneously, but of the end of the age. So it is with the Christian. Life is a going on from strength to strength, and its end is the beginning of a fuller realization of life eternal.

Our Lord calls us to a vigorous prosecution of His great work. This is to be carried on at all times. It consists in the preaching of Christ as the Saviour of men from sin. The work of foreign missions is often criticized, but those who are loyal to Christ have no option but to carry it on, even if there were little result to show. The words of Christ in

another connection, however, hold good here—"By their fruits ye shall know them." The theory of foreign missions will bear ample testing in the light of experience. Let us see what the theory involves.

No one form of words, not even the Creed, still less one text, can sum up the content of Christ's message. Still our text explains some chief principles of His mission. Many systems of thought have clamoured for the support of mankind. They have sought to meet human needs, and each has professed to meet them more effectively than any other. But no system has completely covered the ground except the Gospel of Christ.

We may take three varieties of system and see where they fail or succeed, modern systems, heathen systems and Christianity. In the Christian world to-day there are systems which seek to replace Christianity, but when compared with Christianity they fail. In some respects they fail when compared with heathen religious systems.

Take the case of Socialism, which proposes a solution of a great problem. Of course we have to define what we mean by Socialism, and certainly there is nothing antagonistic to Christianity in the theory of Socialism. Yet as Socialism is represented to-day, it is largely hostile to Christianity. It is true that many Christians approach Socialism, but many Socialists make no definite approach to Christian-

ity. Now we can appreciate the aim of Socialism to remove the awful evils of our present social system, but we cannot admit the efficacy of Socialism by itself for this end, certainly not as a substitute for the Gospel. Where Socialism fails is in its omission to take account of sin as a great factor in human life. The very best environment does not do away with sin. Industrial progress can never remove it. The denial of the existence of sin or its grave effects will not do. Sin is one of the outstanding factors in human life, and any system which does not take account of it lacks the elements of permanence. So much Mr. H. G. Wells, who may be taken as a representative exponent of Socialism, admits. In his *New Worlds for Old* he says : " With people just as they are now, with their prejudices, their ignorances, their misapprehensions, their unchecked vanities and greeds and jealousies, their crude and misguided instincts, their irrational traditions, no Socialist State can exist, no better State can exist than the one we now have with all its squalor and cruelty." (p. 219.)

The same argument holds good with regard to the New Theology, Christian Science and other modern systems which cut at the roots of Christianity. These systems tell us that Christianity loses hold because of its insistence on sin and its consequences. It is more flattering to man to be told that he is divine than that he is a sinner. Yet it is far better

to face facts even at the cost of some measure of popularity. The putting away of sin is the gravest problem which confronts the would-be regenerators of mankind.

Passing from such systems, we may survey briefly some religious systems of the eastern world. Hinduism, Buddhism and Mohammedanism claim the partial or universal allegiance of mankind. Critics of Christianity in our own land sometimes look with much kindliness on these religious systems. They belaud them at the expense of Christianity, but they would hardly like to be told that these Eastern systems were more true to life than their own. Yet so it is, for recognition of the reality and gravity of sin lies at the base of these religions. It may not always be confession of sinfulness, yet their obvious efforts to appease the conscience speaks as to the conviction that there is a barrier between the soul and God. "The Hindu's aspiration is to be relieved," says Mr. Sharrock, "from a double burden—the penalty of guilt and the treadmill of existence, but he knows nothing of this 'double cure'." "Cleanse me from its guilt and power." Of Buddhism we may say much the same. It denies any distinction in kind between good and evil, but admits it in degree. Thus vice is a variation of virtue. Mohammedanism represents sin as the transgression of some arbitrary command of God. There is no question of any

eternal principle of right and wrong, of anything inherent in the very idea of a holy God.

Several powerful religions of the present day have defective views of sin, yet their power largely lies in the fact that they recognize man as not being right with God. They attempt to break down the barrier, but without success. This factor accounts for the failure, as well as for the spread of these religions. They have a low ethical standard. The views which they take of sin in itself vary, but all are inadequate. It is very easy to depreciate the Christianity of the New Testament as harping too continually on sin and to say that to-day men do not bother themselves about their sins. We may say in reply that a severe view of sin opens out the most lofty conceptions of the holiness of God, and that the severe view of sin taken in the Bible indicates a very high ethical standard. Here then is a position in which Christianity far excels any other religion. Its ethical standard is unsurpassed.

The Gospel of Christ surpasses also other religious systems in being the only religion which really removes sin. It presents the Cross as an objective Atonement for sin. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world"—not merely "beareth," as some have urged, as if our Lord in exquisite sympathy carried in His heroic soul the sins and sorrows of mankind, but "taketh away." The sins of man are removed entirely by

the Cross. The test of this lies not only in the Resurrection, as showing the conquest of sin and death, but in the peace which the Cross of Christ has ever conveyed to the guilty conscience, and to the dynamic which it has proved to the individual man to enable him to overcome the power of sin. Many a man who cannot prove to others the truth of the Gospel from an intellectual standpoint, can prove it morally in his own life.

There is a further element in which other religious systems must yield to Christianity. That is the historical basis of their religion. Some religions are devoid of any reliable historical basis. In others fact and myth are intermingled. Others again, notably Mohammedanism and Christianity, have a sound historical basis, though the enormous ethical contrast between Mahomet and our Lord places Mohammedanism far below Christianity, not to speak of the lack in Mohammedanism of great factors like the Death and Resurrection of our Lord.

The position at which we arrive is thus the supremacy of the Gospel of Christ. Though comparative religion affects somewhat the view which we take of other religions, it emphasizes the unique position of the Gospel. That alone has in it the cure for the ills of man. The leaves of the Tree of Life are for the healing of the nations.

The power of Christianity is summed up in our text. " He made Him to be sin for us, who knew

no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." There we have sin placed in its right light, and righteousness as well. This is no mere conception of righteousness, but we are brought through Christ right into the righteousness of God. In a word, when we have those words, sin—righteousness—Christ—God, so closely associated, we have a system which no religion of the world can approach.

It is then little wonder that the great Conqueror of sin and death should have charged His Church with the propagation of His Gospel. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

This warfare of the Cross is not to stop because of the warfare between nations which covers so much of Europe just now. A thin red line—the soldiers of the Cross. So few, a mere handful compared with the soldiers of our King. We shall not grudge the scanty resources which we spend on this spiritual warfare. Sometimes people speak as if our giving to Foreign Missions imperilled the flow of the necessary funds which form the sinews of war. Why, the whole Church of England does not spend in a year on Foreign Missions what our country spends in a day on the War. The Master Cutler at Sheffield last Monday uttered an earnest plea for no curtailment of missionary subscriptions on account of the War. He asked aptly what men

would think of him if he curtailed his ordinary subscriptions because he happened to have heavy extra payments to make during his year of office as Master Cutler.

Our ability to keep our work going just now counts for much. Long ago the City of Rome was besieged by the Gauls and was in great danger. Suddenly the enemy, like Sennacherib before Jerusalem of old and Von Kluck before Paris of late, retired from the city in despair. One of their spies had brought word that the site of the Gauls' camp had just been sold in the city for a large sum. The Gauls realized that they could make no headway against a people who could display such confidence in the hour of peril. The moral effect was altogether too much for them.

The present is no time for the relaxation of spiritual warfare. The needs are insistent and incessant. You have in the mission field missionaries whom you are pledged to support. It would be sad if they were left to starve in their lonely and difficult stations. Besides the call comes for extension. In Africa, Mohammedanism is a strong and aggressive opponent of Christianity to-day. Everywhere needs abound. After the War these needs will increase. Men's hearts will open, for after the storm, the earthquake and the fire will come the still small voice.

What is to be our answer to that voice ? Is it not

speaking to each heart present? We have been thinking of the pre-eminent qualities of the Gospel of Christ and of its applicability to the needs of the world. But in some ways charity begins at home, and it is for us to see that what we prescribe for others we have first tested ourselves. Are we able to say that the Lord has been made sin for us and that we have been made the Righteousness of God in Him?

IV

THE LOVE OF CHRIST

" Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? "
Romans viii. 35.

In the unsettlement of to-day it is a relief to turn to the firm conviction of St. Paul. He stood four-square to all the winds of heaven. Nothing seemed to move him. He knew his mind. He knew where he stood. He held his ground.

St. Paul was intensely dogmatic, but he was never merely dogmatic. Mere dogmatism does not appeal to us. It repels us. But when we hear a man whose plain, strong speech is an outcome of his character, we are impressed. We weigh what he says to us. We are braced by contact with him, even if we do not agree with his views. St. Paul's dogmatism was never repellent. Profound conviction that he spoke as he was taught of God governed his utterance. Where he spoke on his own authority, he modestly admitted the fact, making no great claim. His character justified his speech. After his conversion there was scarcely a fault to be found with him. In this he came near his Master in whom no fault was found. St. Paul's character was well

balanced. He was massive and strong, yet he had not the faults which often go with strong character. He could be stern, he could be severe, yet withal he could be tender and affectionate to a degree. "We were gentle among you," he says, "even as a nurse cherisheth her own children."

Some people discount his message by tracing a divergence from, rather than a development of the teaching of Christ. But whatever view we take of St. Paul's interpretation of the teaching of Christ, we must admit that the Person of Christ was everything to him. His devotion to his Lord was intense. From the moment when the Lord won his heart, when the new convert asked, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" his loyalty never faltered for a moment. He drew upon Christ for all that he needed of inspiration and strength.

St. Paul's theology may be nearer in thought to Christ than is sometimes allowed, and it is clear that to him Christ stood for love. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?"

The age is ready for a message of love. A few years ago the gospel of ruthlessness was finding widespread acceptance. The cult of the superman was becoming quite the vogue. It involved crushing the weak—that was inevitable, a matter of course, but it aspired to trampling down the strong as well. This cult carried with it the cheapening of affection. Love of course did not die out. There was still

much love in the closer relationships of life, but even there the operation of love must not be too apparent, at least certainly not to those who were outside. If the idea of love must include emotion, emotion must not be displayed, it must be concealed. If art is to conceal art, love is to conceal love. Emotion is somewhat effeminate. It must be kept down, suppressed, or at least hidden. It was something akin to tears, and life had no place for tears.

We have learned differently now. A wounded, stricken and sundered world wants love. The capacity to be loved was always there, but it was not acknowledged. Now intense need has broken down the fence that kept love from reaching the heart, and men are ready, where they are allowed, to respond to love. Even emotion is to be concealed no longer. It is no more like a concealed turning, whose existence you hardly realize till you are close upon it. The corners are widened, the hedges are cut away, and it comes into full view, not as something furtive and unobserved, but as connected with the main path of life. It is recognized that emotion is not necessarily associated with tears. It may play an important part in life, in the life of a strong man, in the life of a free and powerful nation.

There is room in life for love of the highest and noblest type, in a word for the love of God, or, as St. Paul puts it in our text, for the love of Christ. But when we bring to men the message of that love

to-day, it is received by many with incredulity. That love cannot reach their hearts. There is a cloud of doubt round them which defies penetration.

The events of the past few years, which have intensified the need of Divine love, have caused that love to be questioned. If God be love, how can He have allowed such things to happen as we have seen of late? Passion, fighting, famine, cold, nakedness, wounds, death—these things to many deny the love of God, even belie His very existence.

It is reassuring to come back to the strong conviction of St. Paul, to one whose convictions were not only the outcome of his changed character, but had been tested by the vicissitudes of which he himself tells us. Thrice beaten with rods, once stoned and left for dead, thrice shipwrecked, clinging for a night to floating wreckage, in all kinds of perils by land and sea, through brigands, through his own fellow countrymen, in weariness and painfulness, in watchings, in hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness.

All he had gone through raised no doubt in his mind about the love of Christ. No speculative or practical difficulties blocked the way of that love. Not that St. Paul was a man whose path was never crossed by doubt. He had his difficulties, almost at times amounting to despair, but he fought his doubts and gathered strength. Then these woes which have formed so terrible an obstacle to the religion

of some of the choicest characters of our own day, proved to be but the field for the exercise of that love which had melted the heart of the one-time bigoted persecutor of the Christian Church.

The pangs of suffering creation ; the existence of disease ; the power of temptation—these problems did not exclude the love of Christ. In fact what person, what agency could separate him from Christ's love ? Could tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril or sword ? The love of Christ carried him through all these.

The trials of life were so vivid to St. Paul that he almost personified them. "*Who* shall separate us?" These enemy forces were put to flight. "We are more than conquerors through Him that loved us."

We can be separated only too easily from all that we hold dear in life, but nothing can cut us off from the love of Christ. Still further did St. Paul's note of triumph carry him. It lifted him into the unseen world, into the spiritual realm, into the future, into the vast unknown—"neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

From the Apostle's days to our own time there have been great souls whose experience has been

like his. Read the diary of Captain Allen Gardiner, who lay with his men starving on the beach of Tierra del Fuego in his mission to carry the Gospel to the degraded people of that country. The sense of the love of Christ never left them. Famine could not separate them from the love of Christ. "As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long ; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter."

We may recognize all this. That is one thing. It is quite another to realize it. It is of little use to recognize it, unless we realize it. In fact in actual experience does not its realization come first ?

What was it in St. Paul that brought out this note of triumph ? The inseparable love which St. Paul enjoyed could not end with him. If it had ended so, he would have had a life of ease. There would have been no tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or persecution, or peril, or sword for him to face. So far from these things proving an obstacle to his faith, his faith created them. The same holds good to-day. The spirit of self-sacrifice compels men to face these things. It is the spirit which is most akin to the Divine—nearest to that of Christ. If we obey its leading, inspired by the love of Christ, we shall not find in the trials of life, voluntarily accepted, a negation of faith. We shall find them rather a field for the exercise of our faith and Christ's love. It will be with us as with St.

Paul. He threw himself into the line of God's purpose. From the day when a somewhat hesitating Christian layman waited on him in a house in Straight Street, Damascus, and disclosed to him the work that God had for him to do, he never looked back. Never did he swerve from the great purpose which he took into his life that day.

The sight of Christ which he had on the road to Damascus and the message which had come to him three days later brought home to him the love of Christ. Then the active effort to fulfil the will of His Master deepened in St. Paul the sense of Divine love. That love filled his soul, but it did not end there. It carried him through physical weakness, persecutions, and privations such as fall to the lot of few. It went further than this. It gave him the capacity to love. It made his heart go out in love to his own fellow countrymen, and to mankind at large. This is what is wanted in the present day. We speak of the need of love. A Socialist was addressing a crowd at Hull the other day. He sketched the evils of the day. Then he exclaimed, "What is the remedy?" To the surprise of the crowd he shouted out the one word, "Love."

This may seem obvious enough, but it is not so easy as it seems at first sight. In a recent autobiography the writer says: "No one has had such wonderful friends as I have had, but no one has suffered more at discovering the instability of human

beings and how little power to love they possess." It is so difficult to change, to respond to the need which impresses us, to exert the influence which we feel the world needs above all to-day.

Dr. Benjamin Kidd tells us that the power which will move the world now is not force, but the emotion of the ideal. Perhaps we may put that in one word, love—yet it is more than that. It is the possession of one's soul by an ideal. Dr. Kidd does not say what that ideal is. He leaves us to infer it. It may vary in different cases but there can be little doubt that to him the ideal was the same as St. Paul's—the inseparable love of Christ, carrying him through, sending him forth. With the possession of that ideal must come emotion. The love of Christ must move our hearts. There will be feeling. We need not be ashamed of emotion in that sense, so long as it does not end with that—with the luxury of mere feeling, of being thrilled, but nothing more. In fact unless we are deeply stirred ourselves, we shall never stir a single soul.

Then the emotion—the moving out—of the ideal will come. Submitting ourselves to the influence of the love of Christ, and doing so daily, continuing in His love, as our Lord Himself expressed it, we shall be better enabled, however dimly, to bring His love to bear upon the world. We shall possess more power to love. We shall understand St. Paul's words and his life. We shall appreciate

the words of the young Scottish graduate, Alexander Mackay, when he felt impelled to give his life to Africa—" The noblest thing a man can do is just humbly to receive, and then to go out and give."

V

THE CROSS OF CHRIST

"I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me. This He said, signifying what death He should die."
St. John xii. 32, 33.

HAPPILY for us life is not lived in one piece, but in periods. It is not altogether to his disadvantage that man never continueth in one stay. For the responsibility of living is very great. Of it account must be given one day. If life were lived out in one piece, it would be very difficult to make the best of it. All too soon our characters would become fixed. We should get into a groove, from which emergence would be difficult.

The stages of life afford an opportunity for retrospect and for prospect. We look back and see where we have failed. We learn the lessons of experience, and the new stage in life is like a fresh start. We can shake off the habits which have begun to hamper us. We can form habits of better promise in the new period of life which we approach.

This is so with regard to the seven ages of life. The boy who goes from school to college, or from college to a profession or to business ; the young

man or woman who passes from the single life to the bliss of the married state ; the man of matured powers who advances to positions or ranks of greater responsibility ; all have this opportunity of beginning life as it were afresh, of building a finer structure on the foundations of the past.

As we get further on in life's journey our retrospects take a different form. We wonder whether we cherish quite so high ideals as we did at an earlier stage. The early dew of morning has passed away at noon. Does this mean decadence ? To some extent it may do so. It may mean that we have removed the shields of gold from the temple of our hearts and replaced them by shields of brass. In the first blush of youth, in the ardour of first love, we meant so well, we aimed so high. Now, alas ! we seem to feel content with less.

Yet it may not mean altogether decadence. For as we look back on earlier stages that we closed, we feel that we closed them with a deeper sense of satisfaction than we could end a stage with now. If our ideals are not so high as they were then, our sense of having fallen short of our present ideals is more deep than was our sense of falling short of the higher ideals of earlier years.

Yet, perhaps, disappointing as our record is to-day, in the sight of the All-Seeing One there may be more to please than when we had those high ideals of years ago. Who knows ?

Such thoughts may be common to men and women of varying vocation, who view at all seriously —and who does not ?—the march along life's road. They come to the minister of Christ who looks back over one period of his earthly ministry quite soon to close. Maybe he started out with the great aim of making known to all committed to his charge the message of salvation. Possibly the text of his first sermon was, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." A splendid text and a grand ideal. And when after some years the call, fancied or real, came to him to go elsewhere, he boldly took as his text St. Paul's farewell words after his three years at Ephesus— "I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."

At a later stage in his ministry he hardly dares to assert, even if he longs to accept, so high an aim as determining to know nothing amongst his people save Christ Jesus and Him crucified. He knows how many other purposes tend to cross and confuse the main current of life's ministry. So he dares not pretend to so high an ideal or to make so great a claim.

Is he content really with a lower aim and a lower level ? It may not be altogether that, but he knows how much of human weakness vitiates the very best that man can offer. And when he closes some later stage of his work the minister of Christ is somewhat

less confident of having declared the whole counsel of God. He dares not dogmatize upon the subject. The cocksureness, the infallibility of youth have gone. He wonders whether any man knows the whole counsel of God, whether any man is faithful in the declaration of revealed truth, even so far as he has grasped it himself. He appears to have set before himself a somewhat lower ideal than of old—let us hope that it is not really so. He certainly is conscious of falling more short of the perhaps lowered ideal than he was some years ago of missing the very exalted aim which he then espoused.

Yet to the Lord which searcheth the hearts it may not be so. He may discern a richer experience and a riper fruit. The evidences of decadence may be all too obvious in some lives, but perhaps after all in this case the Lord may see that the love to Him is cold and faint, but that the lover really does love and adore, and longs for grace to love Him more. In any case the sense of failure and shortcoming must be there, and it must deepen and grow as life goes on. This is where the beauty of the Cross comes in. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

The touch of human sympathy in the Cross comes in here. Here was apparent failure. Here was apparent defeat and disaster. Yet here it was shown that apparent loss was really gain, that apparent defeat was really victory, that the death

of One meant the life of thousands. Here perchance lies a hint that what appears to be a failure, when viewed in the dry light of frank and honest criticism, may after all have in it some redeeming features, some elements of good. Comforting as a thought like that may be, real as its help may prove, yet that would not justify the claim which Christ made, when He said that His Death would make an universal appeal. The explanation surely lies in the great statement of St. John in the opening chapter of the same Gospel—"Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." It was not a mere bearing of sin, either in the sympathy which enables some men and women to feel even the physical pain and the mental anguish of their dear ones, or in the actual carrying of the sin of the world as a Divine scapegoat, but it was a taking away of the world's sin, a complete removal of its guilt.

This is the factor in the career of Christ which, above all others, appeals to men. A merely ethical Christianity is not enough. The sinner wants to know that his sins have been taken away. Specially in the hour of death does the message of the Cross come home. It is to the Cross that sinful souls turn their dying eyes, for the Blood of Jesus speaks peace to the troubled soul.

The text emphasizes the reality and the universality of human sin. At one time our Lord says

that He will draw all men unto Himself. At another time He says that He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. The Death of Christ presupposes human sin, and human sin postulates the Death of Christ. No other means of removing it has yet been found. The factor which condemns it, which makes it so black, is the factor which condones it, which makes man whiter than snow.

We are looking for a revival of religion. We are wondering what form it is to take. Is it to proceed along new lines, or is it to be much what has been seen when a Divine impulse has swayed the souls of men in days gone by? There are signs that, though the expression of the message of Divine revelation may not quite follow the phraseology of earlier days, the underlying principles may be much what they were in past days. After all the needs of men are much what they were, and human nature is ever the same. We cannot accept any dicta of philosophy or of science which are untrue to human life or refuse to face the facts. The recent report of a sorely needed Royal Commission reminds us that an awful proportion of our fellow countrymen are affected by traces of dread disease, one which more than any other bears both in the Bible and in life the marks of Divine displeasure, one which obedience to Divine law would entirely sweep away. Of late years Christianity has faded

somewhat "from the public order" (*Newman*, William Barry, p. 114). Society has not been either Roman or Protestant; it has been frankly irreligious. It has been as free-thinking (to use an erroneous expression) as was the later Roman Empire, "sceptical yet superstitious," polished yet corrupt.

There are signs too that the old truths of the Gospel may be reasserted with new power. One of the frankest of Biblical critics, Dr. Foakes-Jackson, observed the other day that it seemed likely that the age would return to many of the old-fashioned doctrines of the Bible. We welcome all the light which criticism can throw upon Revelation, but we sometimes wonder whether the more modern views exhibit the regenerating power which the Gospel of one hundred years ago possessed.

So we may expect to witness a return to Calvary. If there be an Armageddon, there must be a Calvary too, else the highest hopes of men must perish in unutterable gloom.

The Cross then should be the centre of the Christian ministry. When the great day of testing shall come, all work, all worship and all witness which have not had the Cross as their centre, will be burned up like wood, hay and stubble, while the results of the Cross-crowned Ministry shall endure the test and shall emerge like precious stones tried in the fire or gold and silver purified therein. If

the Cross must be the centre of the ministerial life, it must also be the centre of any one period of that life. So the retrospect of eight or nine years amongst you suggests the question whether the preaching of the Cross has been the central feature of my message.

We cannot affect to explain the Cross. Could not Christ have drawn men to Himself by some other way than by being lifted up out of the earth? This was the way which He must tread if He wished to draw all men to Himself. Here again we have clear proof of human sin. If sin counts for nothing, why should Christ set out to draw men to Himself, and through Himself to God? In spite of the Cross we see not yet all men drawn to Christ. Potentially they are drawn and each one is drawn, but actually this is not yet fully the case. So the lifting up of Christ, as His somewhat obtuse hearers recognized, was to be the attracting power, drawing men to God. "Magnificent irony!" says Archbishop Alexander, "by which the elevation of a dying man is blended in one symbol with his elevation to the throne, and the shadow of a piece of wood raised by the legionaries of Syria projected into the heaven of heavens." If the Cross is to be this power, the pulpit need never despair of being a power, but it must keep the Cross in the forefront of its message. The pulpit may thus be sacramental—a sign of the love of God in Christ which reconciles men to God.

The Cross of Christ

It has been said that most great social reforms have had their origin in the pulpit. The statement bears examination. If it be true, there is a future before the pulpit yet. Yes—church and pulpit, font and Holy Table, are not done with yet. The preaching of the Cross is the power of God unto salvation to them that believe.

So we ask you to give yourselves a chance just now, because Lent is one of the great preaching seasons of the Christian Church. Our churchgoing may still be in some measure a test of our Christian life—not in its multiplicity, but in its regularity and reality. If the Cross has meant much to you, if through it the Saviour has clasped you to Himself in eternal union and inseparable embrace, then you can seek to help in fulfilling for itself and for others the meaning of our Lord's saying—" I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me."

VI

THE SPELL OF CHRIST

"There came one running and kneeled to Him, and asked Him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?"—*St. Mark* x. 17.

THE man who put this question to Christ was one of the characters who were least likely to respond to His appeal. The weary and heavy-laden, the downcast and outcast, the suffering, the poor, the aged, even the sinful appreciated the appeal of Jesus. Here was a man of a very different type. Three distinguishing features made his attitude to Christ somewhat surprising.

He was young—full of life and vigour. The world presents so many interests to those who have life before them that many young men, and young women too, sit loosely to the claims of Christ. They suppose religion to concern itself with a distant and dubious hereafter. Thousands of young people never enter our churches nowadays. At Oxford and Cambridge hundreds of undergraduates, who a year or two ago were to be found twice on Sunday in the chapel of their public school, give the whole of Sunday to amusement.

The young man was also rich. There is something absorbing in wealth. Getting it and keeping it become an obsession. Wealth enables men to get the most out of the world. Its possessors are apt to be content, self-satisfied and sometimes selfish. They are inclined to want no other world either here or hereafter.

The rich young man was also a ruler. Somehow or other the ruling class is not conspicuous for devotion to God. Some people call politics a dirty game. If that were so, it would be natural for those who took part in it to dissociate themselves from religion, but it is not so, or at least it need not be. There is something sacred in politics. The administration of the State offers a fine field for service. The powers that be are ordained of God. For all that many who are engaged in State or municipal administration hold themselves aloof from religion. Perhaps consciousness of power effaces the sense of dependence upon God. It may be the sense of aloofness or the necessity of not taking a side which detaches such men from much show of religious interest.

These considerations, youth, wealth and public life, which militate against decisive alliance with Christ, operated just as powerfully when He was on earth as they do now. We have only to cite the names of Nicodemus and of Joseph of Arimathaea to remind ourselves how these factors held back

men who felt strongly the urge of Christ. They would operate almost irresistibly when all three were blended in one, as in the case of the rich young ruler. St. Paul states the position in his letter to the Church in Corinth : " Not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called." Some such are called, but not many. The rich young ruler was one of the exceptions, up to a point at least. He came into contact with Christ.

A happy feature of his contact with Christ was that the initiative came from him, not from Christ. He was very keen about it too. " There came one running, and kneeled to Him." What did he want of Christ ? His request was surprising. He wanted " eternal life." What could he want that for ? We little know what feelings are concealed within the hearts of people we meet day by day. Sometimes low, sinful desires lurk within those who outwardly are all right, whose character from a religious point of view does not seem open to question. Cravings, tendencies, temptations which it seems impossible to overcome, hamper many whom the Church and the world would suppose to be beyond reproach. On the other hand, aspirations, with which we should hardly credit them, sometimes lie in the hearts of the most unlikely, as a seed waiting to burst into life or as a spark waiting to burst into flame.

The rich young ruler avowed this aspiration. He told Jesus that he desired eternal life. What was

his true character? Our Lord told him wherein goodness lay—in loyalty to home and parents, in purity, in honesty, in truthfulness, in kindly feeling to others. Did these virtues grace his life? Yes! he was all that and always had been.

That claim may not have been well founded, but the young man thought it was. Many people, with no high sense of honour, whose moral standard is scarcely above the average, have no sense of sin. They will tell you that they have never done any wrong, that they have never done anyone any harm. It may seem impossible to us that they believe this to be the case, but they are perfectly sincere in their protestations. The rich young ruler may have answered to this description. He may, however, have been a straight man and a white man, a veritable Nathanael, in whom was no guile. In either case his character presents us with a valuable opportunity for study. In fact his story is of more value, as allowing an alternative interpretation, than it would have been if we had been tied up to one interpretation of his character. He illustrates the experience of modern men of either type.

Whether his protestation was well founded or not, he wanted Christ, and he wanted something definite from Him. We like to think, and surely we are justified in thinking, that many to-day who are young, or rich, or influential, whether less free from fault than they suppose or whether upright

and clean from a moral point of view, have a desire for something higher and better than they have known yet. They realize that the enjoyment of the world with the opportunities which youth, wealth or influence brings within reach, is not the highest type of life, that a man may gain the whole world and yet lose his own soul. They want, in a word, eternal life.

What did the rich young ruler mean by eternal life? Did he mean the life to come? Perhaps he did, but one would think that he was having so good a time that, even if the deepest needs of his soul were not satisfied, he would not trouble about the hereafter. The word "inherit" does not limit his interpretation of the term to the life to come. An inheritor is more than an heir. The Catechism speaks of us as inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven. The thought of something pertaining to earthly life is suggested. We are often reminded that eternal life begins here and now. Our Lord's words bear out this view. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." "This is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent."

Perhaps it was eternal life in the twofold sense that he desired—something higher, nobler and fuller than life without God could offer.

Still it is hard to define the meaning of the young

man's request. The question which has baffled some of the acutest Christian thinkers down to our own day, as to wherein eternal life lies, may well have baffled the young man. In using the expression he may not have understood what he was asking. Perhaps we can best sum up the situation by saying that he realized that Christ possessed the secret which he wanted, and that he felt that in contact with Christ he could attain just what he wanted. Christ was in his eyes the personality who enshrined the highest ideals he could entertain. Abstract ideals were not enough. *The Times*, in an article on "The Ideal," put the case well. "An ideal cannot live in the sphere of the abstract, it must have flesh and blood. Though it is framed in the light of Heaven it must live and move on earth." (August 18th, 1928.)

Surely it was the goodness of Christ's character and His obvious touch with God that appealed to the young man so powerfully. The love, too, that filled the heart of Jesus had its effect, the love ever present which fastened itself upon the young man directly He saw him. "Jesus beholding him loved him." The love which Christ had for him did not prevent Him from telling the young man the truth. The service of Christ must come first with him. In comparison with that principle wealth and influence must be as nothing. The young man was not prepared at the moment to pay that price. "He

was sad at that saying, and went away grieved ; for he had great possessions."

Into that branch of the subject I cannot enter now, further than to say that the experience of the young man ought to test the reality of our religious professions. I merely suggest now two considerations which occur in connection with our text :

(1) There may be more desire for higher things than is commonly thought, even if it lies deep and takes much to draw it out. It was not till the rich young ruler came into touch with Christ that his high aspirations were drawn out. Some men, some occasions, both all too few, have the power of drawing out deep and wide spiritual interest.

Dame Beatrix Hudson Lyall tells of Dr. Campbell Morgan's expositions of the Bible which were given in London once weekly on a week-night last summer. The heat-wave in July did not affect the attendance, nor did the August holidays. There was a long queue, largely composed of young men and women, outside the building. Dame Beatrix adds : " I stood on the steps of the church last night, the crowds were pouring out and I saw the streets in front black with people and many waiting cars, and I just thanked God that people were still, in these so-called careless days, ready to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the deepest truth of the Gospel story." (*Church of England Newspaper*, August 17th, 1928.)

(2) Christ wants us to-day to take His place. It took the person of Christ to draw out the rich young ruler, but to-day we have not Christ in bodily presence to do this work. It is true that we who are here discern His spiritual presence as ever with us, but the crowd and the man in the street do not detect this. It rests with each of us so to receive Christ into our lives and so to exhibit Him, that people may see something of Christ in our lives and be drawn towards Him. We must not leave it to the clergy. Jesus was not one of the clergy of those days. In the accepted sense of the word He was not a priest. In fact the priests often fell short of what was expected of them, and at times Christ spoke scathing words of condemnation concerning them. I trust that the clergy of to-day present Him more effectively than did the priests of those days. For all that each of you has your own part to play in this matter. Many are waiting for you to exhibit Christ to them. If, by His presence, you can show a close touch with God, real goodness of life and the power to love others somewhat after the manner of Jesus you will draw many, and not least the young, the rich and the influential to the Christ in you, and through Him to God.

VII

THE ONE THING LACKING

"One thing thou lackest."—*St. Mark* x. 21.

THREE interests are represented here this morning. Some of you represent the national defences. To you is committed a share in the protection of the country against its foes. You want to see our Army at its very best, maintaining its noblest traditions and attracting to its ranks the cream of the nation's manhood.

Some of you represent the civil government of our community. To you is committed specially the health and happiness of the borough. The good behaviour of the people, the education of the children, protection against fire or depredation, the lighting and cleansing of the streets, the healthy condition of the homes of the people, the solution of the housing problem, the planning of additions to the city are some of the cares which weigh upon the minds of our city fathers. You want to see the town clean, comfortable and contented, and the citizens taking a real interest in civic affairs.

Some of you represent specially the religious side

of our common life. The religious life is intended for all and should be shared by all. But for all that the religious side of life is specially represented by some here to-day. I speak not merely of the clergy, for it is a fatal error to regard religion as their special concern alone, but I speak of those who form the general congregation of the Cathedral. You want to see the Cathedral prospering, taking its place in the spiritual lead of the town and diocese, fostering its Church life, and serving as a spiritual home and centre, to which citizens may repair for worship and prayer in any time of need.

Our interests are diversified in these three ways. But we all share in one anxiety. Things are not so well with any of these interests as we might wish.

Those who care for the adequate strength of our national defences have great cause for anxiety. It is not that they wish the Army to be in a position to assume the offensive. We have no desire to attack other people. We want to add no more territory to our already large Empire, unless duty thrusts it upon us. But we do wish to be in a position to prevent or to repel attack ; to protect our fellow subjects in any part of the world ; to be able to regard war-scares with equanimity ; and to meet effectively less suspected but perhaps more real dangers.

What strikes an ordinary observer even more clearly is the need of wider support of our Territorial

forces. Efforts have been made of late to attract recruits to our Territorial Battalions, and there has been a splendid response, but we look for the accession to their ranks of more of our nation's manhood.

We have to face a quite natural antagonism to war on the part of the workers, and this antagonism may serve a good purpose. So far as it is international, it may help to make another war between great European nations less possible. At the same time the disinclination to face military service is not confined to the workers.

Those who have at heart the interests of our great cities know well the civic apathy with which they have to contend. There is something lacking. The percentage of voters who take the trouble to go to the poll at elections to our local governing bodies is generally very scanty. In many boroughs there is little competition for municipal office, and when there is competition, the public often take small interest in the contest. It is a matter for real anxiety that many citizens who could take a share in municipal service disdain the duty and, with it, the privilege of serving the community in this way. All honour to those whom pure motives actuate to face the hard work and the sacrifice of time and money which such service involves.

The Church of England and perhaps the Free Churches too have a similar anxiety. The men of the community neglect in large numbers to-day

the call to worship and to service which the Church of Christ sounds. Women seem to respond in larger numbers than men to the appeal of Christ. They feel their need of Him and accept Him. Do men need a Saviour any less than women? They demand tacitly to be allowed a lower standard of morality than is asked of women. Does this suggest that men find it harder to resist sin than women do? If so, they need a Saviour more than women do. Yet too many hang back from Church and from Christ.

Some would have us believe that religious ideas are so much a matter of uncertainty and speculation that they cannot with any pretence of honesty or sincerity take part in worship. In some cases this may be true, but I fear that other causes account mainly for the disinclination. It is one phase of the apathy and slackness which is seen in other branches of life. Whatever be the cause, there is a disinclination of a very serious character, which threatens the continuance of the work of the Churches in the not distant future. Men are disinclined also to hold office in our churches or to take up work in our parishes. If churches lack administrators, their finances must suffer, and their work and influence must decline. What I say may be discounted by the plea that the clergy have an interest in keeping their churches full. This is true, but at the same time we do not take a merely

professional point of view, when we urge that the tone of the community must suffer if the churches decline.

Possibly in some country villages denominational rivalry is a great snare and the overlapping of spiritual forces a deplorable waste of energy. But in large towns we cannot afford to see any weakening or lessening of centres of religious life and work, and to go along a street in a poor district and to see a mission hall or a chapel turned into a warehouse or a picture-hall is a sorry sight.

Some of our young men could do untold good if they would take a share in the work of Cadets, the Church Lads' Brigade, the Boy Scouts or lads' clubs. They do not like to be tied, so the claims of business or the week-end, of the golf-course or the motor prevent men from helping, while as for Sunday School teaching, such a noble and fruitful work scarcely receives a thought. There is something wrong somewhere. "One thing thou lackest." What is lacking?

The patron saint of England, St. George, stands to us for all that is good and great in the English character. He was not specially English, in fact not at all. Yet in the year 1220 he was selected at Oxford as the patron saint of England, dethroning Edward the Confessor from the privileged position which he had held for a century or two.

It is said that Robert, Duke of Normandy, son

of William the Conqueror, was besieging Antioch in the course of his victorious campaign against the Turks. It appeared likely that the Saracens would come in full force to raise the siege, but St. George appeared with an innumerable army clothed in white, with a red cross on his banner, to reinforce the Christians. Then the infidels fled and the Christians took the town. Thus St. George was held worthy at a later date of being taken as our patron saint.

The real St. George hailed from Cappadocia in the third century. He served in the army under Diocletian and suffered martyrdom, being known in the Greek Church as the Great Martyr.

St. George may be taken as typical of a great number of heroes whose example of courage and bravery ought to inspire us to live and even to die in our country's service.

We are persuaded that our Army contains as brave and splendid men as ever it did. But what about those who are contributing nothing to national service in one way or another? Will the contemplation of any heroes inspire them? It ought to put a bit of manliness into some of our brothers. Good-hearted many of them, but wanting in determination and purpose. England needs them, needs them to-day perhaps more than ever she did. But will the call of their country draw them into service? Perhaps it will.

"One thing thou lackest." What was it that the young man lacked, who came with his question to Jesus Christ? There was something frank and honest in that young fellow which just captivated the Saviour. "Jesus, beholding him, loved him." But the one thing he lacked was "treasure in heaven," an interest in the very highest things, the things of God.

What the men of England lack to-day is treasure in heaven. We cast about for explanations and for remedies, often thinking of any but the right one. If we want to strengthen our national defences, it is not enough to popularize the Army. If we want to reinforce our churches, it is not enough to brighten and shorten our services, to make religion cheap or easy. What we need is to lift up the living Christ as the Saviour of men; to tell men that they have to get right with God and that can only be done through the Cross; and to show them that only in union with the ascended and living Christ can they find power to resist temptation and to realize the highest ideals.

You have responded to the call of duty. You have come forward to serve your King and country in one capacity or another. Remember that it may still be true of you, "One thing thou lackest." It is not enough to think that you have entered the service of your King and country, that you have made some sacrifice in doing so, that you may go

forth with your life in your hand, ready to sacrifice even that at the word of command. A noble resolve this and one which the nation appreciates too lightly. It may still be that "one thing thou lackest." No noble deed can take the place of the acceptance of Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord. There is no finer character than that of the man who combines the soldier and the Christian. Some of the grandest soldiers of modern times were so good soldiers because they were so "good Christians." St. George himself was a brave soldier, but it was not on the field of battle that he met his death. It was his witness for Christ that cost him his life. We thank God that His servant George was given grace to lay aside the fear of man and to confess Christ even unto death ; and we pray that we and all our countrymen, who bear office in the world, may think lightly of earthly place and honour, and seek rather to please the Captain of our salvation, who has chosen us to be His soldiers. The same holds good of you who have responded to the call to municipal service. It is possible that "one thing thou lackest." Do not think that municipal or social service is your religion, that because you devote yourself to that, therefore you may regard lightly or talk airily of adherence to the Church of Christ. Some think that in social service they find their salvation. This is impossible. We can find salvation only in Christ, but when we have found it in Him, we can go forth

to work it out in the service of our fellows. We have a duty towards God as well as and before our duty towards men. And even of you who come here week by week to worship it may have to be said, "One thing thou lackest," namely, treasure in heaven. Week by week you come here and hear the command of Christ, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven," and then you may go back into the world to make your pile. If so, "one thing thou lackest," like the rich young ruler who came to Christ. In that case make haste to supply that lack. Put Christ in the first place in your life. Perhaps if the Church does that, the city and the nation will do the same. But judgment must begin at the house of God. If we make Christ the very centre of our life, we shall not have to grumble at the lack of fit persons duly qualified to serve God in Church or State.

VIII

THE GIFT AND THE GIVER

"Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water."—*St. John* iv. 9.

In many people there is a singular unwillingness to face the great issues of life. Whether there is a God? If so, whether He can be known? Whether He has claim on our allegiance? How far these claims go? What principle is to govern our relationship to God? Whether the horizon of our environment is the boundary of our existence? Whether existence goes beyond the term of our years on earth? Can our cravings be satisfied by God, or by less than God?

Many people muddle through life without thinking out these questions, but if we are to make the best and most of life, there are some of them at least that call for settlement. Avowedly I do not say "If we are to get the best out of life." We are not here to consider such a question. A ruling principle of life, according to Christ's teaching, is that it is more blessed to give than to receive. God is a giver. "God so loved the world that He gave

His only begotten Son." So here we have the expression "the gift of God." A question may occur to us, that if God be a giver, why are so many things that we think we need withheld from us? Probably we have material gifts in our minds when we ask this question, and this raises the subject of material and spiritual.

If the material is more important than the spiritual, God goes out. Life then becomes a hard struggle against relentless and ruthless nature, a conflict in which the individual must lose in the long run. Hope is gone, and pessimism—perhaps despair—remains. If the material is paramount, where are those qualities which give beauty and grandeur to life? If there be God, values in life must be quite different. The spiritual must come first. If the material be paramount, the spiritual is quite shut out. No rival is permitted. The material, with characteristic intolerance, must hold the field alone.

If the spiritual be uppermost, there is no such one-sidedness. That due proportion and balance, which are necessary to harmonious working in life, and are characteristic of Christianity, are then maintained. Christ never undervalued the material. He used it. He even asked for it—"Give Me to drink." He provided it for others. He said "Men shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." He

implied in this statement the necessity of bread for man. Herein He reflects the character of God, who gives men their daily bread.

The woman of Samaria, who figures in the text, was muddling through life. Like that of most Eastern women, her lot was hard. She was a hewer of wood and a drawer of water. There does not seem to have been much religion about her. Probably her religion ran to a tacit recognition of God, and little more. She had some idea of what worship meant, and she could recognize the gifts of a prophet in Christ. She was leading an immoral life, but that does not for the moment affect our argument. If she had been the most moral of women it would have been the same. The point is that she was missing something great in life. She was not fulfilling the object of life, she was not exhausting its possibilities. People talk of "experience" sometimes with a rather sinister intent. The possession of the gift of God, which she was missing, is the highest of all experience. The trouble was that she did not "know the gift of God"; she did not see things in their true proportion; she had no notion of spiritual values.

The gift of God in Our Lord's mind at the moment of speaking seems to have connected itself with the idea of life and of water. He came to give life, and to give life in abundance. Full life is what most of us want. Unhappily most people

have strange ideas as to wherein full life lies. Many think that full life lies in the expenditure—even the exhaustion—of vitality ; in its destruction rather than its replenishment. That way lies death, and death is not God's gift to men. Full life is closely associated with the right appreciation of spiritual values. Certain conduct and qualities tend to the wearing down of vitality, some obviously and markedly, others stealthily, perhaps imperceptibly. On the other hand, certain conditions and qualities tend to build up life. In speaking of life, I do not differentiate one branch of it from another. A sound mind and a sound body are closely allied. " Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are holy, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report "—we are bidden to think on these things. Thought on them will not only keep the mind pure, but will contribute to keep the body healthy. The gift of life, and of life more abundant, enhances the worth of the life we enjoy. The strengthening of moral qualities which we feel we need is conducive to the fullest realization of life, as we now understand it, and the continuance of life after death. Right thinking and right living go together ; creed and conduct go hand in hand.

The second gift in our Lord's mind was that of living water. The expression suggests something to feed the thirst of the soul, the craving which many

feel and endure. In her *Story of an African Farm* Olive Schreiner describes this craving. " Why am I alone, so hard, so cold ? It is eating my soul to the core, self, self, self ! I cannot breathe ! I cannot live ! Will nothing free me from myself ? I want something great and pure to lift me to itself." We are reminded almost of the craving for strong drink. St. Paul's words bear out the parallel of the contrast of the two : " Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit." The thirst for the living God is pictured as being as intense as the craving for a bodily satisfaction. The thought of living water suggests also the keeping of our bodies clean, pure and healthy. We cannot come into personal contact with Christ without experiencing the purifying and cleansing power of His presence. Contact with a fine character ennobles and uplifts us ; how much more so contact with Christ ?

We may assent to all this, yet it may be a matter of theory ; a matter of thought and of talk, little more. The crucial point is that life cannot be at its best without these gifts. Moreover, these gifts are mediated to us by Christ. Desire for them may lead us, or even drive us, to Him, or, and perhaps this is a more frequent experience, contact with Him may create a desire for them. In the case of the woman of Samaria the latter experience obtained. She seems to have had little desire for the gift of

God, and in view of the life that she was living this does not surprise us. As far as we know, she had no desire for the higher things, but one day she met Christ. He was not recognized by her. He was a complete stranger to her. She had not even heard of Him. She was a Samaritan, belonging to a different country, a different race and a different religion. Yet He was able to lift her life to a higher level, and to transform her character. This was a crisis in her life, yet it was not recognized as such. Why should it be? It was rather unusual for a man to speak to a woman, especially to one whom he did not know, and for a Jew to ask a favour of a Samaritan. Otherwise there was nothing out of the ordinary about their meeting. We are inclined to look for something spectacular when we picture God appearing to men. Sometimes this obtained in Old Testament incidents, though by no means always there, but it was less frequent in the New Testament. In the Old Testament we have the burning bush. In the New Testament there is a transition to the normal, preparing us for the age when God would mainly influence men through the agency of human beings in touch with Him. This should make the approach of Christ more intelligible to the present generation.

(1) This is an age when the miraculous is discounted and often discredited. There is nothing miraculous in the meeting of Christ with the woman

of Samaria. It was what we should call a chance meeting and a casual conversation. He may have come into touch with us at some time or other. We may ask ourselves, Why did certain things happen in my life? I did not suspect it at the time, but is it possible that God was leading me? Why did I meet that person? Why did I visit that place? Why am I here this evening? Is God speaking to me here?

The place where Christ met the woman of Samaria was one of historic interest. It was a well of great antiquity and cherished associations. This place is all that, but, as the Dean reminded us the other day in the columns of *The Times*, it is still more a centre of worship and devotion, where God is sought and found. God may be near to us more often than we think. We need to be more ready to note His hand, His leading in the ordinary incidents of daily life.

There is another reason why the approach that our Lord made to the woman at the well should appeal to the present generation. (2) This is an age when personality counts for much. Several great religions of the world are associated with commanding names, but in no case does the character of the founder compare with that of Christ, and in no case does union with the founder as a living personality enter into the religion of his votaries. The criterion of Christianity and the

guarantee of its continuance lie largely in the personality which it discloses. In Christ we have to do with a living Person. The term " the living Christ " is a strong one. A dead Christ would make little appeal in days when personality means so much, but if the claim that Christ is a living Person is a strong one, it is also a challenging one. He must show Himself to be alive, even by " many infallible proofs." How is Christ normally to appear as living, except through those whom He influences, in whom He lives ? This is how He has met or does meet us, how He will meet others in time to come.

Three things stood between the woman of Samaria and the blessing which she received when she met Christ. She had to come to know the gift of God, she had to know the living Christ. She had to bring into the open the blot upon her life. All this needed perception and decision. Considerable courage was required ; that courage she displayed. The crisis was to her an opportunity. It may be the same with us. The opportunity to take a wrong step in life comes so often, and is so readily and easily taken ; why not seize the opportunity to take the right step as readily ? " To-day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

IX

OUR UNKNOWN NEEDS

"Because thou sayest, I have need of nothing; and knowest not . . .; I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed . . .; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see."—*Revelation* iii. 17, 18.

The Revelation of St. John the Divine is a book of contrasts. Many parts are sealed, written for a condition of things long past, or for a mysterious and still unknown future. Other parts are perfectly plain, quite modern and present day in their application.

In the earlier portion of the book come letters to the Seven Churches of Asia Minor. Among others the letter to the Church of Laodicea may be taken as reflecting modern conditions. Perhaps we feel it to be a mirror of our own character.

The letter suggests that the Laodicean Church was marked by self-satisfaction and lukewarmness. Without being unduly critical one may take these characteristics to mark the present age. With this goes an unwillingness to brook correction. In London, where the lot of most of us is cast, this may be said to be the case. It is no new feature of

London life. Fitzstephen, the biographer of Becket, gives a description of London in the time of Henry II. He says, " It is evident that Londoners are completely satisfied with themselves." At a later date Latimer, Bishop of Worcester, in his famous sermon on the Plough, preached at Paul's Cross, said, " London cannot abide to be rebuked, such is the nature of man. If they be pricked, they will kick ; if they be rubbed on the gall, they will wince."

People generally are satisfied with their attainments. Notwithstanding, progress is a condition of satisfactory living. It is not automatic. It is to be secured—some taking the lead, eager, adventurous, investigating, inventing, thinking out, pioneering and achieving. When they have done so, all may step out on to the broad highway and go forward and progress. This is true in material matters and in moral and spiritual as well. In things material we are quite contented with our standard of comfort and we take things around us as we find them pretty much for granted. Still when others open up new paths, we are ready enough to step out. In the life of the spirit we are not so ready to come forward. Others strike out new lines and open up new paths, but we are tempted to say at least in effect, " I have need of nothing."

This opens the question whether we have advanced of late years. In some ways we have, thank

God, but in others we may have stood still or even gone back. People are often amused at the ways of a generation or two past, at its narrowness, at its groundless scruples, but a more pertinent consideration is whether we rival the achievement, the passion for righteousness, the walk with God, which marked one or two recent generations. Stationariness is a great danger that we have to avoid.

Progress was the great idea of John Bunyan, the Bedford tinker, whose Tercentenary we commemorate this month. Dr. Jacks says, "His supreme achievement has been to connect the most awful transactions of the soul with the common life of humanity and to invest them . . . with the air of high adventure and romance. It is clear that from one source or another he had imbibed the spirit of the great adventurers." Bunyan tells us his own experience: "As I was sitting by the fire, I suddenly felt this word to sound in my heart, I must go to Jesus. At this my former darkness and atheism fled away, and the blessed things of Heaven were set in my view. . . . I could scarce lie in my bed for joy and peace and triumph through Christ." Bunyan's gifts of imagination and of style were consecrated to write that English classic, *The Pilgrim's Progress*. With all his wonderful imagination could John Bunyan have supposed that the day would come when a tribute would be paid to him by the Sovereign of the realm, who is always

centred in our affections and is just now specially in our thoughts and prayers? Would Bunyan have foreseen that one day the Prime Minister and Home Secretary of the State which imprisoned him for twelve long and weary years, and the Primate of the Church which spurned him, would unite in paying him honour?

The language of John Bunyan affords some clue to the meaning of that of St. John in the Book of the Revelation. The same imaginative gift is conspicuous in St. John's short letter to the Laodiceans. Within a few lines St. John depicts Christ as the Captain whose followers simply must share His burning zeal; as the heavenly Banker who issues not merely new notes, but the purest gold to his customers; as the Trader in fine raiment; as the spiritual Oculist, who can guarantee restoration of sight; as the Wayfarer knocking at the door of man's heart; as the King who invites victorious subjects to share His throne.

Our Lord offers to us, in the words of St. John, gold, white clothing and eye-salve.

What does gold tried in the fire mean for us? Among other purposes Christ came to bring a new sense of values into life. Doubtless we agree that the moral transcends the material in value. If so, moral and spiritual gifts are of more value than material. We may take a simple test. We may look at portraits of men possessed of the wealth that

consists in money and of men possessed of the wealth that consists in mental or moral gifts. Which have the finer faces? There can be no hesitation as to the answer. Gold may provide a portrait, but it cannot ensure a subject for the painter. We are bidden to set our hearts on the true riches; the riches that the world can neither give nor take away; the riches which a man leaves behind him when he dies, and carries with him as well.

The gold tried in the fire is none other than the gift of Christ Himself. He passed through the fiery trial in the furnace of the Cross, and it may have to be that some of us in receiving that gift may have had to pass through a fiery trial. If we have done so, we shall have found that the trial of our faith is much more precious than the gold that perisheth.

Christ offers us white raiment, that we may be clothed. Laodicea was noted for its fine wool. It was of black raven colour, and our Lord sets the raiment which He offers us in contrast with that of Laodicea. The idea seems to be of Christ's own righteousness which He accounts to us, but we may carry the thought a step further. Clothing is a covering and a protection to our bodies. It is also intended to be at least an adornment of our person. Taken figuratively it suggests to us the guise in which we are presented to the world around, the appearance that we convey to our fellows. "Fine

linen is the righteousness of the saints." In communion with Christ our characters ought to develop and progress. We ought to acquire more and more the qualities of truthfulness, courtesy, straightness and good temper. We shall not court popularity—that is unworthy ; but we shall at least seek to become agreeable companions to those whom we meet in business, in pleasure and in our homes.

Christ also offers us eye-salve that we may anoint our eyes and see. This offer suggests the need of discernment right into the heart of things, and of distinguishing between things that differ. We need also to see things in their right proportion, to know the things which matter and to appraise at their true value, or want of value, those things which so often occupy us that are worthless in themselves. We need sight to discern the beauty that is in Christ Jesus, or even to detect His presence. We remember the occasion in the Gospel when our Lord said to to the woman at the well with whom He conversed : " If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give Me to drink ; thou wouldest have asked of Him, and He would have given thee living water." If it were possible for Christ to stand beside any one of us this evening, should we know Him ? Perhaps we should need for our eyes to be opened that we might recognize Him. Just as really He stands among us this evening in His risen power. Do we know that He is here ? What

is our answer to His offer of grace and blessing? It is Jesus who stands at the door of men's hearts now knocking. He comes with tender and gentle tones and with all the masculinity and divinity of His wondrous Personality. There is no room for complacency and self-satisfaction on our part. If we say, "We have need of nothing," we shew that we know not the facts. Let us open the doors of our hearts and invite the Divine Visitant to enter there. Then we shall find the promise true, "Thine eyes shall see the King in His beauty, they shall behold the land that is very far off."

X

KNOWING IN PART

"We know in part and we prophesy in part."—1 *Cor.* xiii. 9.

The criticism is often launched against Christianity that it tells little and explains less. We may say in reply that "little" is after all a relative term, and that in contrast with the vast amount that we have yet to learn about life and the universe, the most we know is but little. After all, it is not thought to be a drawback in other branches of life if knowledge is in a sense small. In the realm of natural science the meeting of the British Association, which took place recently at Glasgow, reminds us that theories have to be revised or even scrapped from time to time, and that progress is being made from year to year, but that we have still a very long way to travel before we can solve many problems. In matters of trade we know relatively so little that the problem of the depression of trade and consequent unemployment baffles our most eminent business men and economic experts. In the world of politics there is no royal road, and the greatest statesmen of all nations realize how difficult it is, for instance, to secure international peace.

In all these matters there is no exact or complete science. If there were, investigation and research would come to an end. Progress, which after all is not an automatic principle in life, would be impossible. Stimulus to human initiative and to the development of character would be gone. There is no branch of knowledge in which we know anything like all. The know-alls are most tiresome people. We meet them at times. Their cocksureness and their self-conceit are very trying. The more a man knows, the more he feels he does not know. In my Cambridge days Professor Westcott, whose learning was beyond dispute, was asked a question by an undergraduate at one of his lectures, and he replied that he was not competent to answer it. We knew perfectly well that he was competent, but his unaffected modesty made him diffident as to his authority. On the other hand, the story is told that it was adduced as a drawback to a certain candidate for the headmastership of one of our great public schools that he had written a book on education. Yet in matters of religion exactness, in another word infallibility, and completeness, in another word omniscience, are demanded. The attribute of omniscience was one which even our Lord expressly disclaimed when He was on earth.

We become discontented with the knowledge which we possess, disconcerted at the knowledge which we do not possess, and dislocated by the

knowledge which we acquire. It is well not to allow what we know to be upset by what we do not know. We may readily admit that in connection with the great problems of the universe and life Christianity does not tell the whole story. In fact, whereas knowledge in connection with most subjects is advancing, in the sphere of what is called religion the area of knowledge may even seem to be narrowing. Things which we thought were certain we find to be not so. We are reminded of the words of the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews concerning the "removing of those things that may be shaken, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain." We have come to learn that in the spiritual realm quantity does not count, and that truth is not dealt out in bulk. Last week an appeal was made for radium for use in our hospitals. The enormous expense of radium stands in the way of its adequate provision. It was stated, however, that very little radium sufficed for the needs of each hospital concerned, and that radium lasts practically for ever. So with the Gospel. Such is its value that, in the words of Christ, "a man will sell all that he has to possess it." We do well to buy the truth and sell it not. If the area of our knowledge of spiritual things is narrow, if its quantity is diminished, its intensity is increased and truth is brought more within our reach. St. Paul in his matchless passage on the place of love in life is so frank—"we know

in part," yet so confident—"we know." We are reminded of his words to St. Timothy : "I know whom I have believed." The limitation of knowledge affects the question of authority in religion, but St. Paul seems to lift us above such questions. It is often asked where the seat of authority is to be found. What Church possesses it ? Rome or England ? Men to-day care less and less about authority. What tells is life, and that is not affected by the narrower area of our knowledge. The point is that we are linked with God. "The Word was with God, and the Word was God." Many lives exhibit this. They know in part, but they know enough. Even with regard to the life of Christ only part is told to us. We remember that God has revealed the truth to men by "in divers parts and in divers manners" (Hebrews i. 1). So it is with our Lord. We have not materials to write a biography of Him as Man, but we know quite enough to appreciate His character and His Person. Our partial knowledge is a comfort, for it suffices. It is also a prospect, for it opens up a certainty that "we shall know."

St. Paul passes to another thought—"we prophesy in part." In these days incompleteness of available knowledge on great spiritual questions depreciates somewhat the credit of the pulpit, yet men are very ready to complain if a preacher affects an air of infallibility. Neither preacher nor hearer

need demur to the limitations of present possibilities. After all, what we know is quite enough if it is passed through the crucible of experience. What matters in preaching is Life. A dead pulpit, a dead ministry, a dead church, are a contradiction in terms. They are impossible in theory, but often the concrete contradicts the abstract and we meet them at many turns. They are repellent to those who seek reality and life. What we want is life, and life more abundant, self-realization and self-expression.

Another requisite in preaching is liberty of prophesying. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." The man who tells the message of Christ needs to be untrammelled. If his message is to mean its most for us, he needs to have an expanding and growing character and to be uplifted by the emancipating power of Christ present in his heart. We need not mind allowing him a little licence, if it is not the licence of degeneracy, but poetic licence —a licence that is creative, productive and effective.

We want also love in the Christian message of to-day. We want not the thunders of Sinai or the lightnings of hell, whatever be their reality, so much as the love of Christ. That was in St. Paul's mind when he said: "Though I have the gift of prophecy and understand all mysteries and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I can remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing." All

knowledge without love would leave us cold. The deficiency and limitation of knowledge which is a necessary condition of living and of preaching in the present day are compensated for by the love of Christ which it is our privilege to share and to shed.

XI

FRESHNESS OF FAITH

"They departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy and did run to bring his disciples word."
St. Matthew xxviii. 8.

The reality of religion is admitted more readily and widely than was the case some years ago. Oppositions of science, truly so called, are not so serious as they were. Oppositions of science, falsely so called, bear witness to the reality of the needs which religion meets and of several basic principles which religion postulates.

There are other considerations which contribute to a fuller recognition of the reality of religion. One need only mention the assurance of the existence of the unseen world ; the expectation of a future life ; the conviction that those we have loved and lost a while are still living and in fellowship with ourselves ; the new sense of spiritual values ; the new light thrown on Scripture by research and scholarship.

All the same there is some cause to fear that religion is taken less seriously by many people than was the case some years ago. Too often dullness,

drabness and deadness overspread the life of the Church. In many churches Lent means less than it did, and in some cases Easter lacks the spontaneous joy that the season once possessed. Contrast the modern Easter with the Easter Day of the Gospel story. In that story we find evidences of life and energy everywhere. Look at the two women paying their visit to the garden tomb. The outcome of that visit is described in our text which, though brief, yet teems with life. We have the terse expressions "they departed quickly," "fear," "great joy," "they did run" to tell others. It is not too much to say that these features are lacking in ourselves at Eastertide. The likely explanation is that the Resurrection is less vivid and less arresting to us. We may excuse ourselves by saying that the first disciples could scarcely help believing. This is not the case. Belief was not easy in our Lord's time on earth. The hymn, "I think when I read that sweet story of old," may be very beautiful in sentiment, but it is scarcely true to experience, if it suggests to us that belief and obedience would have been easier when our Lord was upon earth than it is to-day. The atmosphere which prevailed then made belief difficult. Tradition and sentiment were all against it. Circumstances of defeat and shame surrounded the Cross of Christ. Many of the disciples found it hard to accept the fact of the Resurrection in spite of the strength of the evidence which

faced them. When the facts seized hold of them, forces were liberated which we miss to-day.

To our predecessors of a generation or two ago Easter meant more than it does to us. We define less than divines did in days gone by, so we are less dogmatic and we emphasize details less. We are content to accept the simple fact. There are factors in history which bear out the evidence for the Resurrection. The life of the Church ; the pre-eminence of the spiritual ; the hope of its victory over the material view of the world—these are hard to explain or to accept apart from the Resurrection. Easter crowns Good Friday with victory. The Resurrection sets the seal of triumph upon the Cross. Further is there not a something in us which impels us to say, " I have seen the Lord " ?

A serious state of things arises if we accept all this but are unaffected by it. In that case we should incur the risk of having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. Others would suffer, even if we did not. We should discredit the great truth which we affect to believe. We should rob it of its power. We should fail to bring it to bear upon human life. If the spiritual view of the world is to gain acceptance, if it is to prevail over the material view, we are the people who ought to be interested in its victory. We are the people who ought to care the most. We are the people who ought to make any sacrifice to secure that end. " This is

the victory that overcometh the world, even our Faith."

Let us go back to the tomb in the garden and note the conduct of the women who found it empty. The features which marked their conduct ought to mark our witness. (1) "They departed quickly." The world knows the importance of speed. Go to a factory and see a machine turning out work with more than human ingenuity and completing many specimens of its produce every second. Go to an office and see the typist at work, able to type many words a minute and to take down in shorthand many more. Go down to the Great Western Railway and watch one of its expresses moving at the rate of seventy-five miles an hour. Watch the flight of an aeroplane, with its speed of a hundred miles an hour or more. Listen to the record of the famous motorist who attained a speed of over two hundred miles an hour. In all these things we see the value which the world places upon speed. Does the Church realize that the King's business requires haste?

(2) "Fear." It was not terror that moved the two women. It might have been, if it stood alone, but it was rather awe and reverent wonder that filled their souls. The fear which they experienced was the ballast which steadied their souls from being exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelation which was disclosed to them. Their

position was that of Christian at the house of the Interpreter when replying to the question, "Hast thou considered all these things?"—"Yes, and they put me in hope and fear."

(3) "Great joy." Generally speaking perhaps it is fair to say that the note of joy is not prominent in the demeanour of the disciples, so far as it is described in the Gospel story, until after the Resurrection. Then their joy was full. It rises with the Ascension. It reached its height after the gift of the Holy Spirit. Presumably the joy of the disciples of to-day should continue on the same level.

(4) The women ran to bring the disciples word. They were eager to bear witness to the things which they had heard and seen. It was not a case of being punished if they failed, but of spontaneous action on their part. They were so exhilarated that they ran to tell their friends. Readers of the Life of Archbishop Temple will remember his election to a Balliol scholarship and the prediction by a neighbour of influence that he would rise to greatness. In referring to the incident in later years Temple stated: "How I walked on air as I went home." We have had the World Call presented to us of late. It concerns itself largely with the proclamation of the Risen Christ to the world at large. Is our response at all adequate to the greatness of our message and commensurate with the needs of the world to-day? "The World Call has resulted in a certain mild

surprise." This was the frank reply of a vicar to the question as to how far his parishioners had been interested in the presentation of the World Call to them.

How can we recover the spring-like freshness, the new life of those early disciples? Dr. Streeter[1] tells us that if we once accept into our inmost selves an idea fraught with the emotion of joyful adoration, love and trust, then by the fundamental laws of the nature of mind that idea must begin to work. He thinks that it cannot but produce marked results upon men and things, our temperament, our character, our nervous system, and upon our physical well-being. These results will be directly proportionate to the extent to which the idea penetrates our whole selves. According to our faith it will be done unto us.

"Lord, in ceaseless contemplation,
Fix my thankful heart on Thee,
Till I taste Thy full salvation,
And Thine unveiled glory see."

[1] *Reality*, pp. 299, 300.

XII

OUR INTENTIONS

" Intending after Easter."—*Acts* xii. 4.

This is the sole mention of the word " Easter " in the Bible. Of course, it is an anachronism. Herod had never heard of Easter. The word was not coined in his day, nor was it coined when the Acts of the Apostles were written. What the king had in his mind was the Passover, and what he said was, "After the Pasch," the Passover Feast. Our translators used the word " Easter " to suggest to English readers the time of year and a parallel feast. They acted on the same principle in speaking of " pounds " in one of our Lord's parables, when the coin in question was quite different from our pound, and in translating our Lord's request, " Bring Me a penny," when the coin named was quite different from our penny.

The translators of the Revised Version have altered the expression to "After the Passover." Personally I am rather sorry for this, for, though the text in the Authorized Version is a paraphrase rather than a translation, the three words suggest a phase of character which is very familiar, and they

do so more pointedly to English readers than would a literal translation of the original.

"Intending after Easter." The Herod in question was a despicable character. He desired to retain the allegiance of the Jews by his political support of Judaism. He curried favour with his subjects by persecuting the Christians. He murdered St. James, and was ready to mete out the same treatment to St. Peter. He arrested him, and he only waited for the psychological moment to put him on trial, and then to put him to death. For some reason or other, whether because of religious custom or to secure an opportune moment, Herod decided to wait until after the Passover before putting his intentions into effect. Possibly religious scruple exercised a restraining influence upon him. If so, that was so far good. Religion has higher purposes than the restraining of the ungodly, but it may be an incidental advantage if it serves to put the fear of God into the heart of the evil-doer.

"Intending after Easter." We are all given to making plans. We are always intending. It is right that we should do so. It is well to have an aim and object before us. Some lives are aimless and purposeless. They seem just to drift along, controlled by, instead of controlling, circumstances. Such a spectacle is deplorable. While it is right to have some sound intention in mind, there are two things that have to be said.

(1) Intending is not enough. We remember the old saying : " The road to hell is paved with good intentions." Men of action are needed to-day. We must see that we carry out what we have in our minds. You will remember Thucydides' verdict on Themistocles : " What he promised he was also able to perform." Our politicians and others as well will do well to note this, and to act upon it.

(2) Our intentions must take God into account. " Man proposes ; God disposes." St. Peter was guarded closely in prison. Escape was impossible. He was confined within several locked doors and heavy gates, and guarded by sixteen soldiers. In spite of these precautions, and of his contentment to make no attempt to break out of prison, he escaped. " The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against His anointed." The Psalmist continues with an air of scorn : " He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh ; the Lord shall have them in derision." Despite Herod's intentions, St. Peter was set free. One great factor had escaped Herod's notice. The first Easter had taken place some time before.

" For lo, He comes, the mighty King,
To take from death his power and sting,
To trample down his gloomy reign
And break the weary prisoner's chain."

We can find comfort in this at times of depression

and discouragement. "He must reign, till He hath put His enemies under His feet." The conditions of Herod's day are closely paralleled in countries which do not acknowledge Christ. For a long time China has been seething with confusion and discontent. Hostility has been shown in many parts to the brave men and women who have gone to the country to bring to its people the message of the Cross. For the past six and a half years Bishop Holden has been working in his Diocese without a break under circumstances of continual strain and almost daily danger. Miss Tobin, a worker of the Church of England Zenana Missionary Society, was carried off by brigands, and despite conditions of extreme danger for over forty days was released unharmed in body and unscathed in mind. She says: "The angels of God stood round about me and kept me safe." In our own land, thank God, we are Christian enough not to set ourselves against Christ. His servants can proclaim His message without fear of molestation, and there is no need for the pulpit to declaim against the legislature or the judicature. At the same time we must keep in view the need for positive elements of good in our national policy. The present is a time of planning. The Government has been intending after Easter to declare a certain course. To-morrow it intends to make known the details of the Budget for the coming year. On Thursday a positive, constructive pro-

gramme is to be submitted, in view of the coming General Election. Happily there is no fear of these being anti-Christian in their tendency, but will they be Christian enough in the true sense of the word? Will they tend to the welfare of all? Will they include reforms which the conscience of the whole nation approves, or will they be mainly sectional in character?

Lately a manifesto was issued by Christian leaders, pressing five vital issues upon electors to Parliament. The first issue was the pursuit of international peace, accompanied by a readiness to accept arbitration in cases of disagreement between nations, and to reduce armaments as time goes on. The second was the removal of slums, and their replacement by better dwellings. The third was the solution of industrial problems by concerted action. The fourth was the raising of the age for leaving school from fourteen to fifteen years. The fifth was an immediate effort to deal with unemployment. Anent the issue of this manifesto, a leading Church paper says: "It is the weakness of such pious advice that it can be accepted by the adherents of all parties." That ought to be its strength. It would be if the Churches were more virile and more aflame. Anyhow, let our prayer and our policy be that "truth and justice, religion and piety be established among us for all generations."

"Intending after Easter." To us Easter is the

door of spring and summer. At such a time we make our plans for the next few months. What have we been intending to do ? How far were these plans selfish ? How far does God come into them ? We knelt at the Holy Communion on Easter Day. The lesson of Good Friday was still fresh in our minds. The love of Jesus came home to us anew, and we were thankful for His sacrifice and our salvation. On that day the glory of Christ's Resurrection burst upon us afresh. We thought of His great sacrifice, of the triumph of good over evil and of life over death. The sense of the fullness of life, which Christ came to give us, filled our hearts, and with it came a desire for that newness of life to which His Resurrection calls us. So we consecrated ourselves to be the best that we could be, and we joined in the prayer : " Here we offer and present ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy and living sacrifice unto Thee." Perhaps a recent Confirmation or the weeks of Lent had strengthened our resolve. Anyhow, we intended after Easter to be constant in our worship, to be regular at the Holy Communion, to render some special service in the cause of Christ, to associate with companions who would be a help to us, and to try to be unworldly and Christlike in character. Our intentions were of the very best, but we have to face the fact that " after Easter " such intentions are not always fulfilled. Sometimes a great attempt to keep interest

up results in a slackening later on. There may be a great effort to increase the interest of a parish in missionary work overseas. Perhaps there is a missionary exhibition or festival. All goes very well indeed, but afterwards, instead of the parochial standard rising, there is a decline. It may be that a World Call is set before the Church, and for a time there is an access of real feeling, but after a time there is a slackening of zeal. A mission or convention may be held to deepen the spiritual life of a town or deanery. Everyone seems keen and eager, but afterwards there is a falling off. It is difficult to account for this all too frequent feature of spiritual life, but we have to realize that the time of Communion or even of witnessing the Transfiguration on the mountain top has its dangers. We may arrive powerless and perhaps purposeless when we reach our fellow men who await our help at the foot of the hill.

What are we now, while Easter is still so recent? What shall we be in a few weeks' time? The compilers of our Prayer Book showed considerable knowledge of human nature when they framed the collect for one of the Sundays after Easter: "O Lord, from whom all good things do come, grant to us, Thy humble servants, that by Thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good, and by Thy merciful guiding may perform the same; through our Lord Jesus Christ."

XIII

A VOICE FROM HEAVEN

"Father, glorify Thy Name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again. The people therefore that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him."

St. John xii. 28, 29.

SOMETHING happened when the Father thus addressed the Son. What that something was was open to question. But of the occurrence there was no doubt.

Our Lord stood on the very threshold of His Passion. The internal conflict which precedes some tremendous decision, some great crisis involving sacrifice, is hard to describe. The agony of soul is intense. To some souls it is more than they can bear. So it was with our Lord. In a strange way He shrank from death. Though so brave and fearless, He seemed almost to fear death. Millions of His followers have faced death without hesitation. But at the threshold of the Cross He hesitated. The awful burdens that bowed His head on the Cross explain the situation. The word which means "taking away" the sin of the world also means "bearing" the sin of the world. He who can

measure the waters in the hollow of His hand and weigh the mountains in scales found bearing the sin of the world a weight heavier than that which any Atlas had to bear. He had to cross an Atlantic Ocean in the spiritual sphere, before he could reach the Pacific, but when He came through, it was indeed to the ocean of God's peace that He came—a peace which passeth all understanding.

It was when the struggle was at its height that the voice came. All that our Lord cared for was to glorify His Father's Name. Some Greeks wanted to see Jesus. His heart was touched. To think that some strangers wanted to see Him. The world was so cold, so cruel. Even His own people did not want Him. He came unto His own and His own received Him not. Yet here were some simple-hearted men, who were not His own in the strict sense, but just outsiders, wanting Him. His heart went out to them and the arms of His love embraced them. They were symbols of a world which needed Him, if so far it did not want Him. Yet before that world, before even those Greeks, could be really His, something had to be faced—the Cross. And then He shrank from the thought of it. "Father, save Me from this hour"—was His first prayer. No, there must be, there shall be, something better than that, so He prays, "Father, glorify Thy Name." That could be His only prayer, for it was His only purpose in coming into the world, His only wish.

A Voice from Heaven

"Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it and will glorify it again." Something happened. It was not imagination. What was it? Three impressions prevailed as to what occurred. "The people that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered." In the publicity of Eastern life it was quite likely that some people who had no connection with Christ or His disciples would be present. They would watch the introduction of the Greeks to Jesus. They would note, perhaps suspiciously and jealously, His reception of them. They would listen to His words to them. Whether our Lord's prayer, "Father, glorify Thy Name," was a soliloquy or not, the silent cry of the soul to God or the strong appeal of the Son to the Father, the people heard the sound of the reply. But to them it was just a natural phenomenon. What we hear in a summer storm they heard that day—nothing more. They said that it thundered.

What they said was quite true. It did thunder. But there was more than thunder in the thunder. There was the voice of God. We recall the Old Testament incident when Elijah witnessed the storm bursting over the hills of northern Israel. He thought that surely the thunder was the voice of God. Yet that day the Lord was not in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire, but in a still, small voice. It was strange that to the stern, strong prophet the voice of the Lord should come in the gentle breath which

scarcely stirred the leaves in the garden of his soul, while to the gentle Jesus the voice of the Lord should come in thunder. But so it is—God fulfils Himself in many ways, and He supplies the balance which our nature needs, making up the complement of character, till we all come unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

In that thunder on the eve of our Lord's Passion there was the voice of God, conveying a definite message. Nature speaks to those who will see or hear. We can find

> " tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

It is perhaps more common to find stones in sermons than to find sermons in stones ; to come for bread, but to be given a stone. Yet the stones will speak. They will preach. They will even cry out. Their message may not be the same to all. Just as different persons see different pictures in the same looking-glass, so different persons may see and hear different lessons in the same scene. The great thing is that we should have eyes to see, and ears to hear.

> " Thou, who hast given me eyes to see
> And love this sight so fair,
> Give me a heart to find out Thee,
> And read Thee everywhere."

We must not read into nature exactly what we wish, like the thief who excused his felony by saying

that in the notes of the wood-pigeon he had heard a voice inciting him to steal two calves, when he had only meant to steal one. But there must be such kinship with God that we may read in nature a message of God. "I will hearken what the Lord my God will say unto me."

We might develop the thought further. God speaks to us in the events of life, in personal events, in family events, in national events. We may not always have the prophetic gift in such measure as to say precisely what God is saying to others. We may know more particularly what God is saying to each of us, if we will hear. And we may know some things which God is saying clearly enough to a nation through national events. In this connection it may not be so much the question whether we have the spiritual discernment to find out what God is saying as whether we have the moral earnestness to care what He is saying, or the patriotism and the altruism to make us long to bring the message home to our fellow countrymen.

There are elements which condition our knowledge of what God would say to us. The mere onlookers at our Lord's welcome to the Greeks heard the voice from heaven. It was but thunder. There were others to whom the sound meant more. "Others said, An angel spake to Him." These were men who sympathized with the Lord Jesus, perhaps disciples of a sort, men who stood on the

fringe of Christ's own inner circle—some of the people who heard Him gladly, who followed Him eager to hear the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. There was something more in it than met the ear. There are such people to-day. They believe in religion. They are members of our congregations, more or less regular. They stand about the fringe of the true followers of Christ. They have a genuine respect for religion. "As the new wine is found in the cluster, and one saith, Destroy it not ; for a blessing is in it." (Isaiah lxv. 8.) In the Church of Christ they see grace resident. In a knowledge of Christ which they do not possess, or which, alas ! they have let go, they see a blessing which they desire their children to enjoy. When God's judgments are in the earth, they are ready to learn righteousness.

Yet they miss something. It is not enough to say, "An angel spake unto Him." It is not enough to believe in the reality of religious experience. It is not enough to be a nominal member of the Church of Christ. It is not enough to come to church on and off, perhaps even to come to the Holy Communion now and again, unless one believes in Christ as one's own Saviour and confesses Him before men.

If we are not merely to get the good out of religion that may be got, but to be of the least use to God in our day and generation, there must be

the knowledge of God and the walk with Him, to which He calls us.

What was it that happened when Jesus was talking with the Greeks? Did it thunder? Yes, and more than thunder. Did an angel speak to Him? Yes, and more than an angel spake to Him. A voice from heaven came unto Him. It was the voice of the Father speaking to His well-beloved Son.

Did any of those who were with Jesus know what the voice really was on that day? Perhaps not then. St. John tells us what it was. But at the time he may not have known, for he was not always what he afterwards became. It may be that years afterwards in the light of the fuller grace which he received, and under the influence of the Holy Spirit, he could say, "I see now the significance of what we heard the day that our Master interviewed the Greeks. It was the voice of the Father. Would that I had known it at the time. What a difference it would have made—to us—and to Him." So St. John in his mature years could set down in what used to be called the spiritual Gospel, not only the significance of the voice, but the very words which were spoken and their meaning.

The Father had been glorified already in the Son. Though the Son might fear that such was not the case, though He might pray, "Father, glorify Thy Name," the Father had been glorified in the Son, and what was to follow would glorify the Father

yet again. Our Lord stood there when He uttered that prayer, as one whose whole purpose was to glorify His Father. "That the Father may be glorified in the Son"—that was His one wish. We are pledged to follow Him. We must have a purpose as He did. Have we a purpose in life? Christians are committed to a life of purpose. And that purpose is Christ's—to glorify the Father. So we admit every day when we say the Lord's Prayer. Our first petition in it is to that effect. "Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name."

This may involve many a struggle. It would have been easy enough before the Cross for Christ to have been saved from the agony of facing the Cross. It would have been easy for Christ to come down from the Cross. But if He had spared Himself, He could not have glorified His Father. Nor could He have saved the world. Many a soul has passed through a similar experience of late. He has made the great surrender for his country's sake. For a time perplexity, perhaps agony, for, however loyal a man may be, the love of dear ones and the love of life are strong. But when once the decision has been come to, he steps out readily and gladly—as our Lord stepped into the night of the Cross. May not this be so in the highest sense? "A greater than Solomon is here," a greater than any earthly king. The King of kings. Shall we not do for

Him what we—or others at least—will do for their country? The one purpose in life worth having is to glorify our Father in heaven. All else that is good will follow in its train.

And with that decision for Christ will follow spiritual perception. "If any man will do His will," said our Lord, "he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God." All kinds of spiritual difficulties will be cleared up. You will not merely remark that it thundered when God speaks. You will not even be content to say that an angel has spoken. You will recognize God's voice, and inasmuch as recognition is not complete without interpretation, you will be able to give some idea of the meaning of God's message to those who want to know.

XIV

A VISION AND ITS OUTCOME*

"I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I, send me."
Isaiah vi. 8.

THERE must be many present whose recollections go back to the reign of Queen Victoria. They will recall the deep impression produced by her death. Queen Victoria had seen the Diamond Jubilee of her Accession. Despite what some modern critics have said, her reign and her character were alike great. Her people loved and reverenced her, and the Queen's death in the opening month of the twentieth century was felt as a national blow, not least by the younger generation.

That will give an idea of the national position at the time of which our text speaks. Uzziah had seen his Jubilee as King of Judah. He was a great king. He studied his country's interests in every way. Industry in general and agriculture in particular flourished under his rule. The territory under the control of his kingdom expanded considerably during his reign. He was also a good king. He

* *Preached at the Jubilee of Truro Cathedral, May 19th, 1930.*

was revered and loved by his people, and his death made a profound impression on the nation. This is shown by the mention of the year of his death as a well known point of time. "In the year that King Uzziah died," introduces an incident described in one of the finest passages of the Old Testament. The passage in question goes on to state the effect which the death of the King had produced on a certain young man. That young man was Isaiah. He came of good family. He was well inclined. He took part in the religious observances which were customary in his time, but he does not appear to have been particularly religious in his earlier days. He had been much moved by the death of the King. He was never likely to forget this event. His loyalty was evoked by it, and his patriotism was stirred. He was just in the right mood for a special appeal to come home to him.

In this frame of mind Isaiah went into the Temple to worship. He had done so many times before, but he had not been particularly impressed. Still he did not on that account give up going to the Temple. It was well that he continued his practice of worship. Often he saw nothing in it, but on that day he saw much. Coming in an impressionable spirit, he was stirred to the very depths of his soul. He had a marvellous vision of the glory of God in the Temple. The veil which hid the unseen world from sight was rent in twain. The divine became

visible. "I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the Temple. Above it stood the seraphim . . . and one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts : the whole earth is full of His glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke."

The experience of Isaiah on the great occasion described suggests several considerations appropriate to the present occasion. This is no ordinary day in the history of this Cathedral. Since its completion a new generation has sprung up. The younger generation takes things for granted. It does not picture the past, or think out the history of struggle which has led up to the achievement so familiar to it. The fiftieth anniversary of the laying of the foundation stone of the Cathedral has arrived, so it is well to reconstruct the past.

Edward White Benson, the first Bishop of Truro, came to the new diocese with great ideas of what might be possible in the way of a cathedral, and what the cathedral might possibly be. "To build a cathedral, a holy and seemly House," wrote Arthur Benson, "as a visible sign and symbol of Church energy and influence, and a radiating centre of sacred activities, was one of the Bishop's most congenial hopes." Benson lost no time in setting to work. It was a difficult task. Some £120,000 had to be raised for the first part of the building,

but within three years enough was raised to justify a start. "The 20th May . . ." wrote the Bishop, "was a really happy day. The weather was gorgeous . . . the sky was more beautiful that I ever beheld it." "At the place of the Rubric—'the stone is prepared by the Masons with the accustomed ceremonies'—the Freemasons did their part, just instead of masons, and when the 'Grand Master' had concluded this portion, the service proceeded. The dignity and the simplicity and naturalness with which the Prince poured the corn and wine and oil over the stone added much to the ceremony, and the force and clearness with which he delivered the impressive little sermon, ending with an excellent passage of Ezra, chosen by Lord Mount Edgcumbe, rang out of a really serious spirit. The whole of the clergy, near four hundred, had previously assembled in Church, and robed in silence, and then by ourselves we had the Veni Creator, the usual psalms of the office and the Lord's Prayer. This was most solemn. And in all the Churches of the city there had been Holy Communion celebrated, at the temporary Cathedral twice. Over the whole of the vast crowd of the amphitheatre, or rather two amphitheatres (N.E. and S.W.) and over the whole day's events was a strange, solemn, sweet brooding which none have ever failed to own. All was quiet, all was natural, but we all felt that there was something of unwonted

sense of the Eternal being near. How can we live up faithfully enough to that day ? " (*Life of Edward White Benson*, Volume I, page 454.)

And again, to quote Benson's address at his Diocesan Conference a few days later : "As we think of our own little column-segment swung to its place before our throne's and our people's nearest and dearest ones, with the fullness of the Church's most ancient ritual, with the hymns of a great society which, in other lands, was denounced as irreligious till it became so : with our Duke, the heir of England, solemnly reading in our ears the lesson of Ezra ; as we think of the vast enclosure emptying itself of this world's greatness, only to resound louder yet with the blessings and hymns of miners and peasants, and foot-weary yet happy women and children, we shall pause before we suffer this dear country of ours to take that fatal leap of irreligious education which has filled the continent with doubt of God, with distrust of man, and founds the commonwealth of toleration upon warrants of suppression. . . . May it at least be one work of assemblies like these in England to cast some light on what true liberty is—even the glorious liberty of the children of God." (*Life*, Volume I, page 456.)

I might add much more, I might tell of the Consecration seven years later, when George Henry Wilkinson was Bishop, and of the erection of the nave and towers sixteen years later still, when John

Gott was Bishop, but our concern is with the foundation of the Cathedral.

A few here can remember those great days ; they can live them over again. We want the generation which has arisen since to realize the greatness of those days, and the imagination, the enthusiasm, the courage and the perseverance which marked them, that they may catch something of that same spirit.

Most of you, perhaps all, have visited this Cathedral before, but perhaps never in the spirit in which you come to-day. May God help one who has known this Cathedral, taken a pride in it, loved it almost from its earliest days, to suggest some lesson for us to take away with us to-day.

You come in a different spirit to-day, perhaps more ready than at other times to see the glory of God here. Do you find here the atmosphere of the presence of God ? Does a sense of His greatness seem to fill the house ? You will remember the vision of Jacob at Luz. He arrived there at evening. There was nothing particular to impress him, but in his dreams he had such a vision of God's presence and blessing as is granted to few men. He awoke and said, " Surely the Lord is in this place ; and I knew it not. . . . This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." You will remember also the experience of Moses in the desert at Horeb. He caught sight of a bush. It appeared to be

aflame with fire, and Moses realized that the presence of the Lord was there. You will remember also the experience of the young man who accompanied Elisha, when the Syrians were trying to find him and to capture him. He realized that the prophet and he were hemmed in by the enemy, and he was filled with fear. Elisha prayed that the Lord might open the eyes of his companion. "And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man ; . . . and, behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."

Is our experience at all the same ? What has been evident to the eye of faith to-day ? Archbishop Benson used to be conscious on entering an empty church of the presence of the company of heaven. The church seemed to him to be full, and he never felt alone if he said Matins in an empty church. Perhaps we cannot rise to the same height, but surely there is something in the fifty years of the Cathedral's history which must make its appeal to us to-day, not least the reality which was behind the efforts of the founders.

" Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable assembly of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant."

As members of the Church of Christ you belong to the grandest society that the world has ever known, and you come into fellowship with God Himself. Coming here to worship Him in spirit and in truth, are you conscious of the Divine Presence in the midst of His people ?

We may remember some of the effects which the vision of the glory of God in the Temple had on Isaiah.

(1) He was thrilled by what he saw. This was the supreme moment in his life. He had not realized before that such a vision was possible, and he was spell-bound. We felt years ago a proper pride in our achievement in the erection of this Cathedral. Bishop Gott in his Visitation Charge in 1896 spoke of what Cornwall " with its ruined mines " had been able to achieve. While that in itself ought to thrill our souls, it is not enough. The spiritual purpose of the founders of the Cathedral ought to be evident to us to-day, and that ought to enhance the spell which the service of this day is calculated to produce. Does the atmosphere of the Cathedral thrill us as it ought this afternoon ?

(2) Isaiah was filled with a sense of his unworthiness. He felt unfit to be in the presence of God. " Then said I, Woe is me ! for I am undone ; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips ; for mine eyes

have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." We are reminded of the experience of St. Peter when a sense of the presence and blessing of Christ in the boat on the Lake of Gennesaret evoked from him the prayer : " Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." " He was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken."

We can understand Isaiah's feeling. Being in the company of some good or brilliant person makes us feel small. We realize our imperfections and our shortcomings. An inferiority complex threatens to seize hold of us. We visit some sufferer who bears pain, perhaps long continued, without complaint, and shows a bright and contented spirit in it all, and that humbles us. We meet some hero of the Great War, or of missionary work overseas, and their company makes us feel how little we have done in life.

To-day we realize how much God has done by means of the great men who graced this diocese in its early days, and the humble folk who did their share in helping them. We have seen with our eyes and we have heard with our ears the noble things that God did in their days. All this makes us feel unworthy of following in their steps. We realize how little influence we are asserting by means of the heritage which they have placed in our hands. Our fellowship with these great souls makes us

aspire to live more worthily, and to make better use of the great opportunities which are placed within our reach.

Am I assuming too much in saying this? Some people in the present day lose by being so sure of themselves. A little more sense of sin would be well in their case. It might induce more lofty and noble aims and ambitions.

If we enter into the meaning of to-day's service, we shall realize what great things God has done for us. If we appreciate the dreams and visions which filled the hearts of those who planned and built this church of God, we shall feel humble with the sense of our unworthiness.

(3) Isaiah heard the call of God and answered it. He tells us that his iniquity was taken away and his sin was purged, and that thereupon he heard the voice of God sounding in the Temple, saying: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Isaiah was just in the right mood to hear this call. Thanks to the impression produced by the death of the king, he was ready to see the vision of the glory of God in the Temple. The impression produced in him found expression in his response. "Then said I, Here am I; send me." There and then he consecrated himself to do the will of God, and he gave his life in splendid service for Him. He proved to be a noble character, a great patriot and a true man of God. Your position, even if you

belong to the laity, is much like that of Isaiah. He was not a priest, but just a layman.

You must feel thrilled and inspired to-day. If not, you must be very hard to move. You must feel humbled too, to-day, with a sense of your own unworthiness. The lamp of life has been handed to you to keep burning and to pass on to others. The heritage of the quite recent past has been entrusted to your care, that it may be improved and handed on to generations to come. It is well if you feel unworthy of so great a trust. Unworthiness is the best claim to grace and inability is the best title to power.

You must not be content with mere emotion ; there must be a definite response. Emotion is often disparaged to-day. Why is this ? Surely it is because too often emotion degenerates into mere sentiment. What is the use of being thrilled and stirred unless there is some definite outcome of this experience ? Emotion really means the machinery of our soul being set in motion ; our being carried out of ourselves to fulfil some task. It is because emotion has failed so often to have a definite outcome that the very meaning of the word has been misunderstood and its value discredited.

We look forward to the future of this Cathedral during the next stage of its history with hope. If it is to fulfil its noble purpose through us, there must be a sense of the presence of God felt here. That

atmosphere those who are responsible for its care can do much to make or to mar. The Cathedral ought to exercise an influence throughout the diocese. It ought to be a spiritual home for every section of Christian people. The faithful ought to be welcomed here from time to time, and the tribes of the Lord, when they come up to their Zion, deanery by deanery, should find a sense of the Divine Presence and glory here, and should carry back to the different parts of the diocese divine grace and power. In that way the sacred influence of this place will go forth to the Tamar on the one side and to the Land's End on the other, and to what our Land's End may justly symbolise, the uttermost part of the earth.

XV

OBEDIENCE TO THE HEAVENLY VISION

"I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."—*Acts* xxvi. 19.

Without heavenly vision life would be drab and dull. We might compare it with a journey in the dark in a springless cart of rude construction. The rider is unconscious of jolts, as the cart is driven along the lines of least resistance on the road of smoothest convention. Still it is at best a poor journey. "Where there is no vision, the people perish."

It may be asked whether vision connotes religion. Preachers are sometimes tempted to claim for religion a monopoly of spiritual qualities. This is scarcely fair, though it is a matter for inquiry how far Christian tradition and a pervasive Christian atmosphere have given rise to these qualities in non-religious environment. We may make considerable admission as to the exercise of the faculty of vision in very varied quarters, quite independently of the influence of religion. While making this allowance we may claim that the highest type of vision connects itself with God. We like to think that that vision is not the privilege merely of those who come into closest touch with God, but that some vision of God comes to men in every land where the Church

has taken the trouble to plant the Gospel of Christ. St. John goes even further. In the first chapter of his gospel he speaks of the "light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

The tacit ignoring of God by many people at the present day may seem to amount to a denial on their part of the reality of any heavenly vision. Yet surely, if they were honest, they would admit that at some time the heavenly gleam had come to them. Perhaps even now, at some occasional serious moment, they see the light or hear a heavenly voice, though they go on their way with apparent unconcern.

In no Pharisaic spirit we may say that this is not so with ourselves. The heavenly vision has come to us. It may be to some a memory of bygone days —perhaps of their earliest years—for one of the criteria of Christianity is that a child can receive its message. Though dealing with the most profound questions which can tax the keenest and maturest intellect, it can come within the comprehension, or at any rate the apprehension of a little child. We remember our Lord's words: "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." Many a picture reminds us of what the heart of a child may be. We recall Winston Churchill's picture of his father as a little boy saying his prayers at a preparatory school. We remember within the past two days

the agonized father's story of the dear boy who smiled his way into heaven as he lay dying of burns at Gillingham—a death due entirely to human folly, and in no sense to be described as what is sometimes styled " the act of God." It may be the recollection of a child, of someone who, though no longer a child, had still the heart of a child, that brings to us afresh the heavenly vision—perhaps even impels us to look for the morn when those angel faces smile, that we have loved long since and lost a while.

In some other way the heavenly vision may have come. It may have come at Confirmation, or in some happiness or some sorrow, some success or some failure, some ambition, some desire, some longing—perhaps unsatisfied—which the Lord would transmute and sublimate for us, if we yielded to His will.

We need not pursue the thought. " The heavenly Vision " has come to us at some time ; of its reality we have no doubt. Mathematical proof is not necessary to attest its reality. In fact we are rather suspicious of claims which fit the divine and infinite too exactly into the framework of our little systems. Still, the divine treasure is in earthen vessels, and in spite of their defects, it is through them that we have seen the Lord. Even if at times the vision has been blurred, vague and indistinct, it is none the less real and convincing.

Obedience to the Heavenly Vision

What ought to be the outcome of such a vision? We deduce that from the experience of St. Paul. Before his vision, though a very religious man, he did not possess the attractiveness that belongs to a man who has seen a vision of God. He was unlovely, repelling, bigoted and intolerant. After he had seen Christ, new values possessed his soul—love, happiness, peace of mind, large-heartedness, usefulness, modesty, self-control. More than that the heavenly vision had brought home to St. Paul what his life-work was to be henceforth. He was to tell of the love of the Christ whom he had hated to the non-Jewish nations whom he had despised. He underwent a complete reversal of outlook, interests and sympathies.

The same experience befalls men to-day. This is not a cause for surprise. It is seen not infrequently in political life. Why is this change not seen more often in the sphere of human character and conduct? The infrequency of such change may be due to the inconsistency of preachers of the Gospel. Exponents of the Divine law have to preach what they feel they often fail to evince. This must strike their hearers only too obviously, and perhaps discount their message.

In this church the preacher may be judged less severely than elsewhere, for he speaks to exponents of human law, who are in duty bound to uphold

that law, and to demand its satisfaction in the punishment of the wrong-doer, yet are conscious of not being at all points above reproach as observers of that law. We preachers proclaim the satisfaction of the Divine law in the pardon of the wrong-doer through the Cross of Christ. If the modern preacher cannot say as triumphantly as St. Paul, " I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision," he can point to many who, like St. Paul, can say it with sincerity. It is what we all would like to say. If not, the day will come when we shall wish we could say it. It is not easy to fulfil so high an ideal. In a world of conflicting ideas to pursue a straight course is very difficult. Loyalties may seem to come into conflict, and, to put it more plainly, we compromise our principles somewhat from time to time. Perhaps from compromise we may descend to desertion of principle and resolve. Then we may come to live without any principle or high ideal, yielding to our lower selves, and even without hope and without God in the world.

One good feature of Church life is that it keeps us in touch with high aims, and recalls us to our noble resolves. A man who had absented himself from church for eighteen years told me that he had been brought back by a chance remark that he had heard at an open-air service, appealing to men not to forsake church, as they never knew but that they might hear something there that would help them.

My friend has been a regular worshipper and a definite worker for God from that time onward.

Where do we stand to-day? Do we obey the heavenly vision? Christ still pleads with us to follow Him, in showing loyalty to Himself, as well as in sharing in active beneficence. The world also still waits for us. The heavenly vision may be a dazzling light such as overcame St. Paul, or it may be just a gleam, but either is enough. What will be the outcome of to-day's service? Refusal, or response? Drift, or adjustment? Self, or Christ? "To-day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts."

XVI

THE FOUNDATION OF THE MINISTRY

"Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let everyone that nameth the Name of Christ depart from iniquity."
2 *Timothy* ii. 19.

In building a new church the promoters cannot be too careful about the foundations. The temptation may come to lavish money on the structure and to scamp the foundations, but this policy spells trouble later on. A few hundred pounds extra cast underground will help in finding the Bread of Life for the people after many days.

But this must be done at the right time. The putting in of the foundations soon passes, else they are of no service. A special day comes when with flags flying and ample ceremonial a foundation stone is laid, which bears in symbol the stress of the structure, and the work proceeds. The stone stands for all time and its simple inscription recalls in later years the date and suggests some thought to inspire those who read its message in days to come.

To-day is for us a day of foundations. A new diocese just formed—the foundation stone laid

here a few weeks ago—and the foundations themselves not yet complete.

No two dioceses are quite alike. Various circumstances determine the individual character of each. Geographical conditions have not a little to do with it. Where—as here—a diocese practically coincides with a county, the associations of the county impress themselves upon the diocese. Climatic conditions and the temperament of the people also have their share in shaping it. The local history of the Church makes its own contribution, and the personality of the Bishop counts for very much. When the Diocese of St. Albans was formed out of that of Rochester, the remaining Diocese of Rochester had no geographical unity. It consisted of two isolated portions of territory. So Bishop Thorold resolved to make his own personality the cementing force in the diocese, which he took over from your own Bishop Claughton. How he succeeded his biography shows clearly and those of us who worked in that diocese know well.

But we must not rely on any Bishop alone to build a new diocese or even to lay its foundation. He may be in a sense the architect. In a higher sense let us hope its Builder and Maker is God. Our leader will go to Him for direction. Then he will tell us his vision. He will seek to carry out all things according to the pattern showed him in the Mount, but it is for every Churchman to take a share

in the foundation of the new diocese. It cannot be the work of one man. It must be the work of all.

Our new diocese is one of no small importance. Its very size and situation cause it to rank high among English dioceses from the first. To some of us it conjures up thoughts of the ever-advancing hosts who bear down upon us from greater London. The district of London-over-the-Border is in itself more populous than many a diocese. What is its future to be? We make bold to believe that its material and social future depends largely on its spiritual future. Its scanty and placid past has been swallowed up in the flood which now pours over its territory. Whether that it is to be a stream of lava, impressionable at first, but soon hardening with a drab and death-like stolidity, or whether it is to be a flood of living waters, fertilizing with new life the land over which it flows, depends not a little on the influence of the Church. Its traditions are being settled, its character is forming, but still there is time. And we look forward with confidence. Our Bishop's namesake discourses in his new book on *London Survivals* about the loose stones which here and there recall the London of the past, but we believe that our Bishop is gifted pre-eminently for contributing to the foundations of the London of the future. We must look upon the other portions of the diocese also; the Cathedral town, ancient Colchester and Waltham Abbey; towns and

boroughs like Harwich, Southend and Clacton, the older Maldon and Saffron Walden ; places like Romford, Grays and Tilbury Docks ; centres in rural Essex like Epping, Ongar, Braintree and Thaxted, with several hundred country parishes —these are to form one composite whole. There is to be no jealousy between town and town, between rural and surburban Essex. Our Jerusalem is to be builded as a city that is compact together.

You, my brothers, who are to be ordained to-day, will have a large share in seeing that the foundations of the diocese are well and truly laid. It fell to my lot at one time to work in Cornwall. The diocese of Truro had been formed some seventeen years. The traditions associated with its foundation were still quite fresh. The men whom the first Bishop had sent into the diocese were looked up to for their work's sake. An element of romance surrounded them. One incumbent was regarded with special respect as the first man whom Benson had ordained priest. So in years to come you will be remembered as the first men sent forth from the new diocese to your work for God.

To-day the foundation of your ministry is laid. This is for you one of the two greatest days in your life. It is a day you will never forget. And as we lay the foundation of your ministry, we should like to write some inscription on the stone, which will come to mind when you look at the foundation in

years to come. I should like to repay the debt which I owe for the message given to me at my own Ordination. The sermon I cannot remember in the least, but the text was left standing clear in my memory for all time, and what better purpose can a sermon have ?

We need some sound basis for our ministry in more ways than one. These are days of uncertainty and unsettlement. The very foundations of the faith are being pulled about. This has not deterred you, my brothers, and it need not deter you, from offering yourselves for the work of the Ministry. The Church of Christ will go on, and it needs the Ministry for its continuance. No one can read the New Testament without realizing that the Christian Ministry is essential to the Church of Christ. What would she do if her sons failed to respond to the call of the Ministry through some spiritual diffidence ?

Yet it would be unnatural if you did not feel some hesitation, perhaps more hesitation than men who were ordained fifty years ago would have felt. The Church does not want those who enter the Ministry to be cocksure on every point from the very first. At the same time she wants them to come forward with a clear message, to know where they stand and what they are going to teach. If I may borrow the titles of two well-known books without passing judgment on their contents, I would say that if you

turn the " foundations " of faith into " loose stones," you will never build the loose stones of human lives into the foundation of the Church of God. In fact those loose stones may become missiles with which we shall be assailed.

Days of uncertainty are no new thing in the history of Christianity. Spiritual transition has often been attended with spiritual blessing. In the days of St. John the Baptist religion was about to be recast entirely, and no one knew it better than he did. Yet what power he wielded, bringing to their knees king and courtiers, publicans and soldiers, and thousands of the people of Jerusalem. The earliest days of the Church were not halcyon days of spiritual certainty.

When St. Paul wrote to St. Timothy there were teachers about who said that the Resurrection was all over. Now some tell us that it is all over with the Resurrection. How does St. Paul meet them? He comes out boldly and firmly with the words : " Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His. And, Let everyone that nameth the Name of Christ depart from iniquity."

As we read the inscription on the foundation we notice the stone itself. The everlasting granite of which that stone consists reminds us of another saying of St. Paul, " Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." He is the only

foundation of the Church and He is the only possible foundation of your ministry.

Whatever be the differences among Christians, all agree in this, that Jesus Christ is the foundation of Christianity. In fact, Christianity is Christ. We may go further and say that nearly the whole of Christendom looks upon Jesus Christ as the Son of God. There may be varying interpretations of His Person, differing Christologies. Need we wonder, when we think of man? Many men, many minds. And when we contemplate the marvellous personality of our Lord, it is only likely that He should be interpreted in different ways. Yet we have this great fact, that in the Name of Jesus every Christian knee bows, confessing that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Keep yourselves, keep others close to this question, which governs the lives of men who have heard of Christ, "What think ye of Christ?" And though there may be many a Pilate without the Church, and some Iscariots within, yet many hearts will beat true to Him, saying "My Lord and my God."

On the great foundation these words appear: "The Lord knoweth them that are His."

What comfort these words breathe in days of perplexity and doubt. Too often we look at the human side in our quest after God—at our believing in Him, our following Him, our serving Him,

our loving Him. It is helpful to think with Francis Thompson of God's quest for us. "I have loved thee with an everlasting love"; "The Lord made thee, and formed thee, and will help thee." "I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine." So too "The Lord knoweth them that are His." He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. Whither, we know not; it may be one day to India, to China, to Africa. It may be in the path of affliction or trial. It may be the way of loneliness, it may be of rich and blessed fellowship. But whatever be the path, it will be His path, so we trust Him. "He knoweth the path that I take."

So to-day we take courage. "The Lord reigneth, be the earth never so unquiet." "The Lord knoweth them that are His," and He knows me, each one may say—all my difficulties, failures, hopes and fears. He knows me and He calls me, and in that confidence I go forth to minister.

A second inscription I read upon the stone, "Let everyone that nameth the Name of Christ depart from iniquity." This inscription is for us all. It is not for the clergy only. We have different standards of conduct in the Christian Church—one standard for churchgoers, another for communicants, another for workers and another for the clergy. The New Testament knows nothing of this. It has one standard for all Christians—conformity to Christ. Have

a high standard for the clergy if you like. We do not ask for that to be lowered, but we do ask for the general standard to be raised. "Let everyone that nameth the Name of Christ depart from iniquity." If every Christian did this, what power the Church would possess. The victory over sin which would result would impress the world. Men would be won to God right and left.

In this we of the clergy must lead the way. God points the way for us—it is the way of holiness and the path of righteousness. If we stray out of the road, the harm which we take and the harm which we make may be irreparable. One man may do more harm than a hundred men can do good.

Eleven of you go to work in London-over-the-Border—six to a Deanery where I worked myself; one to a country town and two to large towns in the diocese. Each of you has enormous power for good and ill. May God help you to be true to Him. "Enormous power for ill," you say, "Yes, quite true, but not enormous power for good." Yes, I repeat, enormous power for good. Think of Dr. Jackson, the young Cambridge graduate, whose missionary career in China lasted only ten weeks. He sacrificed his life in coping with the plague in Manchuria. The Viceroy of Mukden, who was opposed to Missions, sent his mother a letter of sympathy with a present of 10,000 dollars. Mrs. Jackson gave the money to the Mukden Medical

College, as a memorial to her son. "What a mother," said the Viceroy, "and what a son!" And he added 4,000 dollars to his gift, and 5,000 more to the endowment of a memorial chair. Now many thousand patients visit the hospital every year and learn of the healing power of Christ for body and soul.

So we may go forward, laying the foundation of our ministry, and with it of this diocese, in faith and hope. We hear wonderful reports of religious revival in France and elsewhere. May we not look for the same in our own beloved land? The knowledge of God, and the consciousness of God's knowledge of us, and with that full consecration for holiness of life will build up the Church of Christ in Essex and will lift the people up to God.

XVII

AN OPEN DOOR

"A great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries."—1 *Corinthians* xvi. 9.

Various reasons are assigned for the decrease in the number of men who are ordained from year to year. One of these reasons is that the work of the ministry is not a man's job. We do not have to go very far to demonstrate the absurdity of such a notion. Common sense suggests one answer to the objection. We very rarely meet men who regret having taken Holy Orders. I can recall men of high standing and large success as soldier, doctor or lawyer, not to speak of others, who have said to me that they would never recommend a young man to take up their profession, apart from patriotic motives, but I cannot recall meeting a single clergyman who has taken the same line with regard to his own vocation.

It is true that the office of the Ministry has been shorn of some of its accompaniments as time has gone on. Great offices of State were held at one time by the clergy. The work of education was largely

in the hands of the Church. The relief of the poor, social service and welfare work have at different times been the special interest of the clergy and laity. The reclamation of those who have come within range of the Courts through intemperance and kindred causes was initiated by the Church. The State has taken up these causes and to some extent has taken them out of the hands of the clergy. In very recent days the finances of parochial administration, at any rate in theory, have been undertaken by the laity in conjunction with the clergy. Thus the range of the work of the clergy has been narrowed, but it has approximated correspondingly to the work which they were ordained to undertake. Bishop Boyd-Carpenter's list[1] of the requirements that the laity expected to find in a clergyman is, one may hope, less applicable than it was thirty years ago. "He must be a diligent, sympathetic and spiritually minded visitor; he must be an instructive, studious, widely read, and capable preacher; he must be a good organizer, be apt at training choirs, instituting guilds, providing places of innocent and instructive recreation for the young; he must be able to work and to set others to work also; he must have large social sympathies, and know all about movements for social improvements; he must be sufficiently political to know what the masses need, and he must possess that rare intelli-

[1] Preface to *Life of Archdeacon Blakeney.*

gence which can discriminate between passing paroxysms and steady growth of public opinion. Besides all this, he must be active in all town movements, and evince his local patriotism by his interest in sanitation, university extension work, medical charities, and public holidays."

If the description sounds exaggerated to-day, still there is ample for us to do, and with depleted ranks it is well that the scope of our duties should be brought within the range of our vocation. In those duties as now understood and discharged there is ample room for the exercise of all the faculties of mind and body at their best.

St. Paul's words in writing to the Corinthians are just as applicable to the circumstances of the day as they were when they were written. A great door and effectual is open to us to-day and there are many adversaries. Making full proof of our ministry tests us to the utmost. You will remember Bunyan's description of Interpreter showing a stately palace to Christian early in his pilgrimage : " Then the Interpreter took him and led him up towards the door of the palace ; and behold at the door stood a great company of men, as desirous to go in, but durst not. There also sat a man, at a little distance from the door, at a table-side, with a book and his ink-horn before him, to take the name of him that should enter therein ; and he saw also, that in the door-way stood many men in armour to keep it,

being resolved to do to the men that would enter what hurt and mischief they could. Now was Christian somewhat in amaze ; at last when every man started back for fear of the armed men, Christian saw a man of a very stout countenance come up to the man that sat there to write, saying, 'Set down my name, Sir' : the which when he had done, he saw the man draw his sword, and put an helmet upon his head, and rush toward the door upon the armed men, who laid upon him with deadly force ; but the man was not at all discouraged, but fell to cutting and hacking most fiercely ; so after he had received and given many wounds to those that attempted to keep him out, he cut his way through them all, and pressed forward into the palace ; at which there was a pleasant voice heard from those that were within, even of those that walked upon the top of the palace, saying : 'Come in, come in, Eternal glory thou shalt win.' So he went in, and was clothed with such garments as they. Then Christian smiled, and said, I think verily I know the meaning of this."

You have set down your name and you stand before the door. The very word "Door" is a word for young men. It suggests an opening, an opportunity, a hope, a prospect, all that the future has in store. What about the actual work? You are largely concerned with theory. We who come back to you to-day are largely concerned with practice. We can assure you of an open door, of a great door

and effectual. We need hardly remind you that it is still true to-day that there are many adversaries. We have no fear that we shall shake your determination or impair your sense of vocation. The more we emphasize the difficulty of the task before you, the more convinced will you be that the Ministry to-day is a man's job.

It is unnecessary to demonstrate the fact that a great door and effectual is open to you to-day. The familiar term "world-call" is proof enough of that. The term may not be strictly accurate. It may stand for a cry rather than a call; a need rather than a desire; a call from Christ rather than from the world. Still we know that in several parts of the world men are stretching out their hands unto God. At home, too—in London, in large towns, in country towns, in rural parishes—there is a great door open to-day.

Your work will lie mainly in working-class parishes. There is the literal door—the door of the homes of the people will be opened to you. To-day people are appreciative and responsive to a remarkable degree. Be sure that you enter that door when it is opened to you. The opinion having been expressed that the visitation of parishioners was not carried on by the clergy as in days gone by, I sent out a series of supplementary questions to the clergy of London-over-the-Border, prior to my Visitation. One was: "Do you visit your parish-

ioners regularly in their own homes? Do you find visiting draws people nearer to the Church?" The answers in nearly every case bore witness to the continuance of the work of visitation and to the value placed upon it. One incumbent said that he visited each house in his parish once every year. Another, whose hands are very full, has paid seventeen hundred parochial calls during the last sixteen months. Another says that his staff visits daily and that he himself is never satisfied if he has not been in the house of at least one of his parishioners every day, while on most days he visits a considerable number. One vicar speaks of the leaving of invitations upon his people as being of very little value, but of real visiting carrying with it much influence. Very few vicars who affect the practice of visitation are dubious as to its results. One incumbent says that he is always visiting. Another, who is known as a most assiduous worker, reports that he pays one hundred visits weekly and that he cannot speak too highly of the value of such work. He considers that seventy-five per cent. of his congregation have been drawn to church through visitation by his staff. One vicar tries to keep in touch with the factories in his parish. Speaking generally, the answers to my question leave upon my mind the impression that in those parishes which have the greatest reputation for diligent and apparently successful work visitation of the people

is one of the most conspicuous features of the work of the staff. The vicar of one church says that visiting is "our greatest asset," while another says that it avails "more than anything to win the people." In view of this testimony to the value of visiting it will be lamentable if the opportunities open to you are not utilized. An incumbent, who has a large staff, wrote that he regretted much that the younger clergy were so unwilling to undertake visitation of the people. Was his impression mistaken? We must see that it no longer obtains.

I have laid stress on only one particular door that is open to our efforts. Not that others are closed, but this is one of the most obvious approaches to the hearts of the people, and one which will be more open to you in the early days of ministry than several others. Others will occur to you, but in every case you must make up your mind to work hard, if you are going to achieve anything of value in your ministry. The word "effectual," as used by St. Paul, conveys the idea of energy. There is in it the notion of laborious work coupled with the power that worketh in you. It must be that first of all. You must go through the door in the strength of Christ. Take Him with you. It is only so far as He is with you that human effort can be successful, but His presence does not relieve us from the necessity of hard toil. The evening before I was ordained priest the late Archbishop of

Canterbury, who was then Bishop of Rochester, gave us his Charge. I well remember his opening sentence : "You are most of you going to very wearing work, and I thank God for it." No work is harder than that of the Ministry of Christ in a teeming parish. Many who have been in business before taking Holy Orders can testify to that.

The idea that clergy are parasites will gain some credence if we are not putting out all the energy we know in our work. Small though the stipend of the clergy may be, large sums are spent on their maintenance and these, especially in the case of the junior clergy, are not only drawn from the endowments of the past, but from the offerings of the faithful of to-day, made at a cost of real sacrifice in many cases.

Coupled with the thought of laborious work, implied by the word "effectual," is the idea of achieving something in our ministry. That is a most important feature. We must have an aim before us, and that aim we must pursue with a single heart, and our work must in some way serve that end. In the choice of what we shall do, whether that choice is made by our chief or by ourselves, there must be a principle of wise selection and a sense of due proportion. Otherwise we many incur the risk which St. Paul did his best to avoid. "So fight I, not as one that beateth the air." We must consider what bearing our work has upon the great

aim of bringing the Gospel of Christ home to the souls of the people, and we must be ready to discard any features of our work which have small apparent relation to the chief purpose of our Ministry.

Every real achievement in life has its difficulties, and we shall soon find, as St. Paul found, that there are many adversaries who stand in our way. In Bunyan's allegory so long as a man played about outside the door, the armed men did not attack him, but once they saw a man meant business they set upon him without delay. When Christian heard the man of a very stout countenance say, "Set down my name, Sir," and saw him make a start towards the door, the armed men laid upon him with force. If we play at the work of the Ministry, we may have an easy time, but if we mean to fight the forces of evil and to win our way into the citadel of men's hearts, we shall find that there are many adversaries.

The adversaries we have to fear will not be only the avowed enemies of the Kingdom of God, but we may find some even within the Christian camp. In fact we may be at times our own worst enemy. We shall have to watch and pray, lest we enter into temptation. At times our cry may be almost one of despair, "Who will bring me into the strong city?" The answer will come to us, "Through God we shall do valiantly, for He it is that shall tread down our enemies."

So we shall go forth with mingled hope and fear

to enter our open door. The very word door is suggestive of hope. God opens a door of hope even to those who have failed in their valley of Achor. You have not failed. You have not yet begun, so with every confidence we bid you go forth in these critical days to justify the trust which shall be committed to you.

We do not know what the future, even the immediate future, of the Church will be. Problems stare us in the face created by difficulties within the Church in addition to those which are raised by circumstances outside. Large questions connected with worship require early settlement, and much will depend upon the tone and temper of the younger clergy. Will they fight for their own hand, refusing the advances of those who would draw all sections of the Church into close harmony and concord, and wounding the consciences of possibly weaker brethren? If so, though they may enter the door of the Ministry, the adversaries who are ever on the watch will succeed in preventing them from getting much further. If, however, they are amenable to all influences which may seek to draw men together in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace, and if they are only anxious to know and to do the will of God, they will find the promise true, "Behold I have set before them an open door and no man can shut it."

XVIII

NOT MANY FATHERS

"Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers."—1 *Corinthians* iv. 15.

One of our leading journals said lately that the most influential person in English life was the country parson, and that his power must be broken at all costs. It was a striking testimony, coming from a hostile quarter, but it is sad that the exigencies of party politics should allow such a deduction to be drawn.

In the public press and in the House of Commons men and movements are often misunderstood or misrepresented, but in real life they are seen in a very different light. If only critics could have come down to such a parish as this, they would have realized how beneficent a country clergyman's regime may be. They might have chosen the occasion of their visit. They might have come down quietly at any time and asked for themselves in what light the vicar was regarded. They might have come on one of the special occasions in Mr. Wingfield's incumbency : on the fiftieth anniversary of

his becoming vicar, on the sixtieth, or on the seventieth, or on the day last November when you stood by his open grave in the churchyard. At any time they would have heard but one opinion of our friend. The relationship of Mr. Wingfield to his people is best described by one title of the minister of Christ—a father. "Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers." My most distinguished parishioner[1] is the father of the House of Commons, and we are justly proud of him in the parish. Mr. Wingfield was the father of English incumbents. No other came quite near him in length of service in one parish. He ministered to some families in the parish to the third and fourth generation, and for many parishioners he performed the first and last rites of the Church.

Age—honourable old age—does receive veneration to-day, even though this is said to be the day of young men. Our time here is so short, and the past soon seems so far out of reach, that length of days connecting us with long ago appeals very strongly to our minds. Born before Waterloo, Mr. Wingfield lived in six reigns. He was Vicar of Gulval under seven Bishops—his first thirty years under the redoubtable Henry of Exeter; his last forty-three years successively under the strenuous Temple; Benson, the first Bishop of Truro

[1] The late Right Honourable Thomas Burt, M.P.

and founder of the Cathedral; the saintly Wilkinson; Gott, the builder of the Cathedral nave; Stubbs, the poet Bishop; and Burrows, the next holder of the See. At the beginning of his incumbency the railway system of the country was scarcely started, and it was impossible to travel by train from London to Penzance. The telegraph was still unknown, and many necessities of modern life were still undreamt of. Municipal reform had only lately come to pass. The poor-law unions, in the working of which locally Mr. Wingfield took a leading part, were then quite new. The Reform Act was of but a few years' standing.

The agitation which culminated in the Act gave birth to the Oxford Movement. Mr. Wingfield witnessed, while Vicar of this parish, almost the whole history of that movement, and the development of the vast changes which it has effected in the Church of England. The famous sermons of Newman were preached at Oxford during his regime. The publication of Tract XC and the secession of Newman both occurred when he had been vicar for some years. A few years later came the secession of Manning, occasioned finally by the Gorham Judgment. With the Gorham case Mr. Wingfield had an important connection. As Rural Dean of Penwith he was commissioned by Bishop Philpotts, over sixty years ago, to hold an inquiry into the practice of Mr. Gorham in ad-

ministering the Sacrament of Baptism at St. Just Church.

How far Mr. Wingfield was influenced by the Oxford Movement it is difficult to say. He came to Cornwall in days when its churches, so eloquent to lovers of the Duchy, were valued but little. Robbed often of what we now regard as priceless possessions, damaged ruthlessly in many instances by vandal hands, treated too often with scant respect by clergy and churchwardens, our churches were frequently abodes of slovenliness and dirt. This church was from the first the object of Mr. Wingfield's reverent care. Under his hand church and churchyard became a sanctuary of grace and beauty, receiving from time to time such enrichment and addition that the gifts dedicated to-day leave but little for the future to provide.

The parish church as it is is not the only monument of Mr. Wingfield's devotion. Up in the hills some miles away, amid the gorse and the boulders, and near the haunts of prehistoric man, nestles the little church which Mr. Wingfield built for the hamlets of Trythall, Carfury and New Mill, that distant parishioners might have the house of God within reach of their own doors.

Care of the house of God and reverence in worship were distinguishing features of the Oxford Movement, as they were of Mr. Wingfield's character. Yet its principles do not appear to have greatly

affected him. Not that his mind was closed to fresh influences. If it had been, he could not have retained that sympathy with youth, which made the young feel as much at home with him as did the old. Still Mr. Wingfield ended pretty much where he began—a sober-minded son of the Church of England. He has left us in the days of transition. Some may fear, others may hope, that the best days of Christianity are over. Many are perplexed and disturbed. Days of transition need not be days of spiritual failure. The prospect of change need not move us. We must keep close to Christ, "The same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

It was not age alone that made Mr. Wingfield a father to his people. He loved his parishioners—"Like as a father pitieth his children." In the long course of his incumbency he might have moved elsewhere again and again, but his principle was—"I dwell among mine own people." Though not a Cornishman by birth, he became one by adoption, and he won his way to his people's love by the love wherewith he loved them. He showed his devotion in times of epidemic, as did some other clergy in Cornwall, his wife joining him in self-sacrificing care for the sick and dying, and even for the dead. Once he said to me, "It is generally a mistake for a clergyman from a distance to take up work in Cornwall in middle or later life, as it is difficult then for them to adapt themselves to the Cornish charac-

ter." That character is sometimes criticized, but to the sympathetic soul it will appeal as specially lovable, and over Mr. Wingfield it soon cast its spell.

An outcome of the characteristic of love was his courtesy and considerateness. The present age is often blamed for the decay of manners. Our young people might take note of the exquisite courtesy which marked Mr. Wingfield. Nearly twenty years ago I came into the district as incumbent of a neighbouring parish. Though he was vicar of this parish before my father was born, he treated me as if I were of his own standing. With his courtesy went the utmost considerateness. On one occasion a deputation was expected to preach at Gulval for a mission. Mr. Wingfield was unable to be present at church, and he wished the deputation to take the whole service ; no great task, and one not infrequently thrust upon a deputation without notice. The Vicar did not know the address of the deputation, who was staying at Penzance, but he sent all over the town on the Saturday evening to find the clergyman, and to secure his consent to do what he asked.

Mr. Wingfield's influence as a father of his people was enhanced by his dignity. The older churches of Cornwall seem to partake in a special degree of the character of their surroundings. The granite cliffs of West Cornwall wear an air of

grandeur and dignity, and the granite stonework in the tower without and in the arcading within lends a dignity of its own to many a Cornish church. And as church and neighbourhood are linked together, so it may be said in some cases that church and clergyman become blended too—each acquiring the character of the other. Surely this was the case here. Some of the finer qualities of granite marked the vicar's character—dignity, strength, endurance we see in both. It was often the moor-stone which was brought into use in the Cornish churches, but Dr. Cox tells us that far finer results are secured from the granite which is obtained by deep and extensive quarrying. Such quarrying made Mr. Wingfield's character what it was. The rock whence it was hewn was Christ, and long communion with God gave it the dignity which it possessed.

As communion with God impresses the soul with something of the Divine, so long association with a church impresses the character with the genius of the place. Gulval Church blends in a wonderful way the ancient and the modern in a quiet and calm dignity. Such was its late Vicar—old in years, yet fresh and vigorous in spirit ; his ear dull, and his eye perhaps dim of late, but his natural force not abated. Calm and unruffled, he could ignore the puerilities which often disfigure and sometimes disgrace our common life. Details always received his attention, but trifles were nothing to him.

One more characteristic of a father is suggested by St. Paul in the chapter from which my text is taken. He claimed the right to warn his spiritual children, and to warn them specially against the sin of pride. We cannot imagine Mr. Wingfield being moved by fear or favour. If warning were needed, he would give it. He was not one to water down the character of sin. His own humility gave him the right to warn. It was in itself a speaking example of the right temper, as also a standing warning against the sin of pride.

In old days the saints of Cornwall founded our churches. They impressed their names upon the shrines. They did more. Their life impressed their names upon the very places as well. Mr. Wingfield has impressed his name upon the parish as well as upon the church. It is now indelibly associated with the place, though he has given way to the energy and zeal of a new and younger regime. In memory of a gracious and lovable character, and of a long and honoured ministry, we dedicate to-day the clock and bells. The one will remind us of the flight of time and of the term set to the longest life, the other of the call of God to worship and to service.

On the sixtieth anniversary of his becoming Vicar, Mr. Wingfield said to me, " You are beginning, and I am ending." He was not quite right, for fourteen years were still to elapse ere his course was run. Yet is his ministry ended even yet ?

The influence of a faithful ministry goes on after the death of the minister. So should we expect in true ministers of Christ, for He is Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, the beginning and the end ; a Priest for ever ; and the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

To-day we need perhaps more than ever a teaching ministry, yet there is an even higher ministry than this. On all sides men may come forward claiming to be teachers come from God, and it may be difficult to decide their claims. True fathers in God are all too rare, but their marks will be unmistakable when they appear. " Though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers."

May God grant to him who is now set over you in the Lord, and to his successors in years to come, grace to be true fathers of their people ; suggesting some glimpse of the Fatherhood of God ; and loving, ruling, training, warning, and inspiring the children of God committed to their charge.

XIX

FATHERS AND SONS

"But he told not his father."—1 *Samuel* xiv. 1.

The relationship between fathers and sons has altered very greatly during the last century. A hundred years ago a son used to address his father as "Sir," and he lived in continual awe, not to say fear, of his respected parent. Fathers ruled their sons if not with a rod of iron, at any rate with a rod of wood.

All this has quite changed. Fathers and sons are now on terms of intimacy and familiarity, and a real friendship has sprung up between them. In the holidays at any rate sons can share in the interests of their fathers. Golf, shooting, fishing, motoring, place fathers and sons on almost equal terms.

Familiarity of this kind must not breed contempt. It may in some cases lead to independence of the wrong sort. But the advantages of the new relationship far outweigh its disadvantages, and nothing good is achieved without running some risk. The new relationship between fathers and sons may well result in the strengthening of the bonds of family life and it is perfectly consistent with respect.

Boys now speak far more freely than of old to their fathers. They open their hearts to them on many more subjects. There is, however, still a certain amount of reserve in a boy, and though this may have its drawbacks, it helps to keep up the respect due from him to his father.

A great day in a boy's life comes when he goes off to a public school. The influence of home, if wise and happy, has been paramount until now. A new current of influence now mingles with the stream. It may not be and it should not be a cross current, but it must affect very greatly the flow of the whole stream.

In the case of boys at public schools the influence of the school environment may be so strong as to put quite into the background the influence of the home.

Life at a public school or a boarding school does build up a certain independence of character, which helps to carry a boy or girl through all kinds of difficulties in after-life. At the same time it may destroy individuality. There is a certain mould of character in some ways good, but certainly arbitrary, into which every boy and girl is forced. Boys and girls try to crush into conformity anyone who does not fall in with the accepted idea of the correct thing. Not right or wrong, but the correct thing—good form.

Sometimes the worse side of school life may

damage the influence of home in the life of a boy or girl. Sometimes even the good side of school life may do the harm. It is well, then, that we sing in the hymn of my old school :

> " Keep the spell of home affection
> Still alive in every heart."

It is not that the love of home or parents is gone. It is still there, in most boys and girls. It may amount to a longing for home in many cases, and the holidays are always a great time. Yet the spell may not always exercise its proper influence. To some boys and girls the appearance of parents, probably dearly loved as well as loving, is rather an anxiety. At least it was in my school-days. We were so afraid that in some way they would not do us credit. A very exacting standard and a very brutal frankness would sometimes cause sarcastic comments on the personal appearance of relations. It was no sign of unfriendliness to pass such remarks. I remember commenting with other boys on the father of a friend of mine who paid occasional visits to the school. We thought him an awful freak at the time, and we let his son know it, but as I look back on my mental picture of the man, I see that he was a thoroughly estimable gentleman and quite like other people. If a recent book about school life is true, this still obtains. " Few people realize how intensely their visits are dreaded. A boy is not ashamed of his

parents. As people go, he feels that they are up to the average. . . . But he feels that the proper sphere for the parent is the home. . . . He knows how he dissected Jones's parents, and he guesses that Jones will reply in kind." (*The Harrovians*, pp. 77, 78.) There is room for improvement here. The sentiment is not Christian. It is not a fulfilment of Christ's law of love.

Within the next week or so some of you will be in quite a different world from this—the world of school life. In some ways you are like a young married couple. When they are married they are given a send-off in the shape of presents and good advice. In their case there may be more of the presents and less of the advice. In yours there may be less presents and more advice, and you may feel that you could do with more presents and less advice. It is not my wish to overload you with advice, so I just give you one hint for your school life. Tell your father, tell your mother everything. See that school life does not in any way weaken the bond between you.

May I plead for increased frankness between fathers and sons, between mothers and daughters, not only in the holidays but in the term? You sit down to write a letter home. You may find it desperately hard to fill the four pages of your letter. Yet in the world of school life there are all kinds of things which they would like to know. Tell them

about your work, your games, your friendships. Do not think that they do not care to know, still less be too lazy to write about these things. Tell them about the books which you read and what you think of them. Tell them about your difficulties and your troubles. Here I am treading on delicate ground. Many boys and girls would not for worlds tell their parents about their troubles. The spirit of healthy independence prompts them to bear their own burdens. Sometimes shame forbids them to disclose what is causing them much anxiety and distress. The mere outpouring, when one can do it, is often a help in itself, and it may result in very real help being given.

Another factor must not be lost sight of which operates very powerfully in such cases—the scorn of anything like tale-telling. It is not merely the fear of being called a sneak. It is something higher than that. It is the horror of stooping to an unworthy action—a horror which one might wish attached to other faults of school life.

A boy would sooner endure any amount of bullying, or a girl suffer continual petty persecution than speak or write about it to parents. Yet all the time irreparable damage to the physical frame or to the nervous system may be going on. However plucky it may be to bear this in silence, it is not right to go on enduring without complaint a veritable hell.

A still more difficult question arises when some wicked influence is at work in a school. In certain circumstances it is obviously the duty of a boy or girl to tell those in authority or their parents of the wrong-doing—for instance in what we may hope is the rare fault of thieving. To know that this was going on and not to report it would be very like conniving at the theft. To report it would be no disgrace. So with moral evil. It is well if the public opinion of a school is strong enough to put this down. If, however, wickedness continues, it is the clear duty of boy or girl to speak of the evil which exists. However much it may go against the grain to transgress school customs, it is right that parents should be told when actual harm is being done.

I have said nothing of deliberate concealment from father or mother. This may occur for obvious reasons of shame, or through the most laudable motives. Our text records that Jonathan did not tell his father when he set out on his project of attacking the stronghold of the Philistines, accompanied by his armour-bearer alone. It was a feat of extraordinary courage. Up and on they went, step by step. Along the narrow pass they fought their way, and twenty men fell before them. More and more fell, until to the distant watchers it seemed as if the multitude were melting away. At last they fought their way through, and their effort led to a

signal victory over the Philistines. The writer of the story simply says, "But he told not his father." Jonathan was one of the finest characters in the Old Testament. No doubt he had the best of reasons for not telling his father. He wanted to save him anxiety. He knew, moreover, that so dangerous a course on his part would be forbidden. So he held his tongue, hoping in the event of success to present his father with the fruits of victory.

It is hard to say that Jonathan was wrong. Yet his silence placed his father in a very great difficulty. Saul made a very rash vow. He threatened with death any who should taste food till the Philistines were defeated. He was entirely ignorant of his son's position. His son was entirely ignorant of his father's vow. So Jonathan in his extreme exhaustion tasted food. Saul felt that he must be true to his hasty vow, and it was only the people's determined intervention which saved his beloved son from death.

Sometimes with the best intentions a boy keeps things from his father or a girl from her mother, but it proves to be a mistake. A boy or girl cannot err in placing confidence in parents and telling them all. Even though you fear a check on your enthusiasm, or a refusal of your well-meant plan to help or to please, take the risk of that, and keep nothing back. I can imagine the objection rising in some minds. That is all very well, if only one could trust

one's parents to do the right thing. The infallible mind of early years may take that line, but wider experience will prove that parents are more to be trusted than is sometimes supposed. At the same time, if fathers and mothers wish their children to confide in them, they must take pains to prove worthy of their trust. St. Paul's advice to fathers was : " Provoke not your children to wrath." Something more is wanted to-day. We need to win the respect, the love and the confidence of our children. This is not to be done merely by giving our boys and girls a good time in their holidays, but it is to be done by setting an example of what a father and a mother ought to be, especially in the highest of all things.

No one to-day wishes to repeat the mistakes of old days, to force the Christian life upon young people. We cannot read that pathetic book, *Father and Son*, without feeling how fatal a mistake the father in question, albeit of brilliant attainments and of beautiful character, made in forcing prematurely spiritual growth in his son, with the result of producing the inevitable recoil which has lost one of our leading men of letters to the profession of the Christian faith. On the other hand, it may be fatally easy to check the first advance towards the service of Christ by slackness of example or by actual discouragement of spiritual interest.

Many years ago a young Indian who was studying in London was anxious to serve Christ and was

feeling his way towards definite faith in Him. He feared that his father, who was not a Christian, might thwart his desires and check his spiritual ambition. In this state of mind he went to hear a celebrated London preacher. To his amazement the text chosen was, "What if thy father answer thee roughly?" The question was one put by David to this same Jonathan, when he questioned the advisability of Jonathan's proposals. Jonathan was not to be deterred by that possibility, and the thought of Jonathan's determination emboldened the young man to make his decision for Christ, and he went to the preacher after the service to tell him how his text had enabled him to face the possible wrath of his father. Under circumstances of trial this brave fellow made up his mind to serve the Lord. Let us not shrink in our easier circumstances from doing the same.

We must go a step higher before we close. The earthly father is intended to be to us a type of our heavenly Father. We must see that it never has to be said of us with reference to our Father in heaven, "But he told not his Father." Let us not be ashamed of prayer in our school life. If all are expected to kneel in prayer morning and evening, let us not waste the opportunity, but let us be careful to tell our Father about all that we have done—our mistakes and failures, our victories and successes, our hopes and fears. We may be sure that He loves

to receive our confidences and to hear all. There is nothing hidden from His eye, and there is nothing in our life, however ashamed we may be of it, which we need fear that He should know. "All things are naked and open before the eyes of Him with whom we have to do."

We are sometimes told that the public school-boy of to-day is to all intents and purposes a pagan. "And just as the pagan may use traditional machinery of sacrifice to his gods, so the boy may say his prayers and bellow his hymns without damage to his sincerity. He remains throughout a pagan." (*The Harrovians*, p. 142.) Let us hope that this picture is overdrawn. There is without doubt a very genuine set against God on the part of many young men and young women to-day. They are determined to throw off all restraint, and they ignore God and cast religion to the winds. A spirit of licence, one sometimes fears licentiousness, is in the air. Yet there were probably never more boys and girls in school life more devoted to the service of Christ and to fulfilment of the will of God than there are to-day. Do not let your tone be lowered to that of your surroundings. " Do in Rome as Rome does " is as bad a motto as " The better the day the better the deed." A few weeks ago some new stonework was introduced into a post office not far from here. It was coloured with some muddy-looking preparation to make it like the rest of the building. At

the Church Institute, however, the masons are at work giving an element of cleanliness to the old and dirty stonework in the front. The Church sets the better example. So let it be with us. Let the new boy or new girl keep the tone and temper which they bring from home unspotted by the world of school.

I beg of you who are entering or are re-entering school life that you will take God as your Guide through life. Let this be the day of your decision to do so. Do not put it off a single hour. Live your life from to-day trusting your heavenly Father for all you need, telling Him all and trying to do His will. In that life will the life of true devotion to your earthly father and mother best be lived. Between them and you there will be the most perfect understanding. Your character will be free and frank and fresh—the joy of your parents' hearts, infecting them with the spirit of youth and with the delight in life which marks your life. Thus best we may help to ensure that the " God of our fathers " shall be the " God of their succeeding race."

XX

THE NET AND THE BIRD

"Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird."
Proverbs i. 17.

The vaunted superiority of man to animals does not hold good at every point. Even a little bird may be more than a match for a man. A great strong fellow bidden to capture a sparrow without weapons would meet his match. The difficulty of the situation is summed up in the saying, which opens vast sporting possibilities to the mind of a child—If you want to catch a bird, put salt on his tail. So man has to resort to the use of weapons or of guile, if he wants to catch or kill his bird. Possessed of only the weapons of nature and of that gift of flight which man has only learnt of late to imitate, the little bird can often elude the devices and the weapons which man employs against him. Even with the aid of weapons one man is often an insufficient match for a bird. Beaters have to do their work before the bird, overpowered by numbers, falls a victim to their guns. Strategy and deceit have to be brought to bear constantly to encompass the capture of a single bird, for the bird shows himself superior in

wisdom to man. "Surely in vain the net is spread in the *sight* of any bird."

Would that the same were true of man. On Holy Island men stretch nets over the sands to catch the wild duck. Of course nets would be spread in vain in daylight in sight of the birds, but at flight time, when it is dark or dusk, comes the only chance of catching the wild duck. Then there is at times a good catch.

The world is full of nets—not merely set by the hunter for birds, by the poacher for rabbits or by the fisherman for fish. There are nets set on all sides for human prey, and if art lies in the concealment of art there is little art in some of the nets which are set to capture men. The wise man knew what he was saying when he wrote these words. How splendidly he had begun. Vistas of power and wealth had opened up before him, and these had not dazzled him. Sometimes at night the humble cyclist approaches a motor. Its dazzling lights seem to bewilder him as they get near, and when they bear down upon him, he has the utmost difficulty in keeping his balance and picking his way. The dazzling lights of the world's wealth and glory bore down upon Solomon, but he did not lose his balance or his way. He was not perturbed, but he held on. He just asked God for wisdom.

So far so good. But later on things did not go so well. Temptation proved too much for him.

" His wives turned away his heart." There was a sad falling off and the early promise was not fulfilled. So out of a bitter experience Solomon could write words of warning to young men. " My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not." " My son, walk not thou in the way with them ; refrain thy foot from their path." Was it necessary to give this warning ? Surely it was too obvious to what the snares of the world brought men. Surely men who saw the ruin of others and the net spread for themselves would take warning. Was it so ? " Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird." " Behold the fowls of the air," said our Lord. Many a lesson we may learn from them. The net is spread in our sight. Too often we are caught in its meshes.

None of us are quite what we think we are. None of us are quite what God wants us to be. Just now we are called to look closely into our lives, to stand before the mirror of God's Word and to see what we are. We shall receive a warning on some point or another. The net is spread before our eyes, and we too often walk right into it and are caught in its snares. The warning is given, but we heed it not. A man was once speaking to me on the subject of falling into sin. I reminded him that we all get our warnings. " Yes," he replied, " that is quite true, but we do not act upon them." What a strange characteristic of human nature, denoting

something wrong, an inherited taint, an evil tendency, which paint it as we may, predisposes us to evil.

The net is spread for us to-day. "The sin which doth so easily beset us"—a New Testament writer puts it. Soon some of you will be presented for Confirmation. As a condition of Confirmation each candidate renews three promises made for him in his Baptism. The first of these is that he will renounce the devil; the showy but empty things of life; and the sinful desires of the body.

There are three great spreaders of nets.

(1) *The Body.*

The nets which our own nature spreads before us are very specious and captivating. Their special power lies in the fact that they are developments in a wrong direction of natural tendencies of perfectly innocent character. The desire for food is natural, but the exaggeration of that desire may become the sin of greediness. We may put this down as the failing of the school-boy, just as some may term fastidiousness the failing of the pampered school-girl, but we who are of mature age need to be on our guard. Lent comes with its warning that the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink.

Then there is the net of drink. What a fearful snare this is. In the last days of Israel in Egypt the destroying angel visited the homes of the Egyptians

and, as the Bible tells us, "there was not a house where there was not one dead." Not a family but knows the awful power of temptation which intoxicating liquors possess. This is a net which is spread in the sight of many a bird and yet ensnares its prey. The open doors of the gin palace, the opportunities of the club, the facilities for secret drinking—their power over their victim is terrible. He knows it. In his better moments he hates it. He realizes that it means misery for his wife and children, suffering and shame for himself, not to speak of a hell here and hereafter, if he persists. Yet he gives way. Over and over again he is caught in the fatal net.

Other nets there are which the flesh spreads before our eyes. To some it is the net of laziness, prompting to sleep and sloth, when they ought to be up and doing. To others the net of idleness makes its appeal, tempting its victims to waste their time, neglecting work and duty in favour of pleasure or amusement or perhaps nothing at all.

There is the net of impurity, which in spite of all its hideousness to God and man, spreads its net openly and ensnares more victims than perhaps any other sin.

(2) *The World.*

We pledge ourselves in Confirmation to renounce the pomps and vanity of the world ; not, as some would have us believe in their attempt to disparage

the vow, to renounce the world, for that would be to go out of the world. No—there are many things in the world which are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report. These we are not to renounce. On these we are to think. The bad things in the world, and there are plenty of them, these we are to renounce. Those things in the world, of which the best that can be said is that there is no harm in them, these are to be left severely alone. We are to turn our back upon them.

On the Hackney marshes, close to my old parish of Leyton, the London bird-catchers stretch nets of very small mesh vertically across the marshes at night. They flash a strong light in front of the net. Many birds are attracted by the light, and flying towards it they are caught in the net just behind. Soon they are consigned to cages. Their fate may be to be imprisoned in a cage in some humble dwelling for the rest of their lives, or it may be of a different order. You may see a line of little traps upon the marshes. The bird-catcher pulls a string and the little bird fondly thinks it has regained its freedom. Away it flies in the joy of liberty, but at only a few yards' range stands a so-called sportsman with his gun. In a moment the bird falls dead or writhing on the ground. How typical of the ways of the world. It offers glowing attractions, bright and bewitching, and the unsuspecting bird is caught. The Hackney bird-catchers can

only secure their prey by night. The world certainly spreads many of its snares by night, but its efforts are just as effective in the daytime. Are not its devices then only too patent? That does not matter. We cannot say of men, "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any man."

What are the nets which the world spreads? There is the net of pleasure and amusement. It is not only bad pleasures and amusements which spread their nets. It is not only empty pleasures and amusements which lay their snares. Quite wholesome pleasures and amusements may cast too powerful a spell over us, if they take us from obvious duty. Do they take too great a hold upon us? Do they come between us and God? Do they disincline us for worship or for service? If so, they are nets which we must avoid.

Think of the net of gambling. Does not that ensnare thousands? Go to our police courts or assize courts, and hear what is the cause of the downfall of some once promising character. Read in your daily paper the sad story of temptation, defeat and degradation. What did our Chief Constable say in his report last year? "Next to drunkenness, betting is the most fruitful cause of poverty and crime." The late High Master of Manchester Grammar School said that the craze for gambling has "undermined the wisdom, political sagacity, and shrewdness of the men of the

North of England." Can we trifle with this craze, even in a small or apparently innocent way? For the sake of others shall we not sanctify ourselves and abstain wholly from them?

The net of company promoters is spread with astonishing success in the sight of many birds. The prospect of a big, if shadowy dividend; the name of some titled personage on the directorate; the extent of the often imaginary claims—these allure men and women with amazing power, though they know or ought to know the dangerous character of such speculations.

There is again the net of the money-lender, which is held out with astonishing success. We may apply to the money-lender the words of the Psalmist with reference to the ungodly: "He doth ravish the poor, when he getteth him into his net." His methods are only too patent, yet he goes on spreading his net. He must meet with success or he would not spend the pounds he does on postage and deluge the public with his circulars. The moral is plain. "Surely the net is spread in vain in the sight of any bird."

There are other nets of a less disreputable type which the world uses. There is the net of popularity. How that ensnares many a victim. Consistency and principle go to the winds and character deteriorates. The flatterer, too, is a character against whom we should be on our guard.

Solomon said, "The man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net." (Proverbs xxix. 5.)

The net of success, achieved or hoped for, brings down many a bird. Sometimes we see a man who has begun life with habits of godliness, attain a measure of success. Perhaps his head is turned or swollen, or it may be that his time and energy are so heavily drawn upon that he has little left for the worship or service of God. Of course he does not mean to put first things second, nor does he allow that he is doing so. None the less the fact remains that he is not what he was.

And what shall I say of the net of money-making? How engrossing, how enthralling this is. We say of this, as of many a pursuit—how captivating, little realizing what a wealth of truth there is in the word. Hear what St. Paul says: "Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition." (1 Timothy vi. 8, 9.) Such men are like the little birds on the Hackney Marshes. They are imprisoned through their being ensnared, brought into bondage for life, or else as the money-lender, the company promoter or the bookmaker point their gun at them, they are brought down, wounded or even slain, easy victims to their aim.

(3) *The Devil.*

Our Confirmation candidates renew yet another vow of renunciation. They renounce the devil and all his works. One would think that such a vow was scarcely necessary. Surely the hostility of the devil to the children of God is only too plain for man to parley with him. Surely his aim is only too obviously our ruin. Surely there is nothing attractive in his attacks upon us. Yet how readily we give way to him. We know it is wrong ; we know it is for our own hurt, yet we yield. St. Paul speaks of some who are his victims. He expresses the hope " that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will."

Those who know their Norfolk Broads will have heard of the Fritton decoy. It is a survival of what was once a frequent means of catching wild duck. The decoy consists of an arched netting spread over an inlet from a broad channel, which narrows as it proceeds. At the head of the decoy is a circular space. It is quite obvious that the duck would never be entrapped by this means alone. " Surely the net is spread in vain in the sight of any bird." So other means must be added. One or two tame ducks are trained to swim about at the entrance to the decoy—to make it look innocent and harmless. More than this, however, is neces-

sary. So, parallel with the decoy, there is arranged a succession of hurdles. In and out of these a yellow dog is trained to run. What that has to do with the decoy it is hard to say, but it is efficacious all the same. The yellow dog—it must be a yellow dog—begins his capers. The wild duck seem to be hypnotized. They follow into the decoy and by the time that forty or fifty have got into the circular space at the head of the decoy a net is let down to shut them in, and the duck are trapped and killed.

How typical of the snares of the devil. Why men go after him, we know not, but he seems almost to hypnotize them, to cast an irresistible spell over men, so that, though they know their course is wrong, they go straight on to perdition. How else can we explain the course of some? Surely they know where it will end.

Solomon was a wise man. He was an expert in the nature of temptation. He was the type of expert most highly valued by some people. They think most of the man who has fallen into the snares of sin. That man is to them the one who has seen life and knows the world. That is not the man, however, to be of much use to us. We need the man who has faced temptation, but has conquered it. That is the expert for us. It is Christ. So we can say with David—"Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord; for He shall pluck my feet out of the net." (Psalm xxv. 15.)

The Net and the Bird

Are some of you only too conscious of being caught in one of the nets which I have described? The imprisonment is so real, the bondage is so hard. But you can be set free. The Lord has come to proclaim liberty to the captive and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. "In the Lord put I my trust: how say ye then to my soul that she should flee as a bird unto the hill?" In the words of the Confirmation Service we will reply—"Our help is in the Name of the Lord, who hath made heaven and earth."

XXI

TOWNS WITHOUT WALLS

"Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls, for the multitudes of men and cattle therein."—*Zechariah* ii. 4.

In the absence of recognized leaders the need often produces the man. When the return of the Jewish exiles from Babylon took place the little band obviously needed leaders. In the caravan was a child, who, like a Child in a caravan in New Testament history, was destined to become a leader of his people. A few years later, just at the time when Haggai stood out to urge the people to rebuild their temple, Zechariah came forward—quite a young man, but richly endowed with the prophetic gift. Zechariah was a man of wider outlook than Haggai. Perhaps as a scion of a priestly house, he had received a better education. He was just as keen as Haggai on the erection of the Temple, but he aimed at more than that. He embraced both Church and State in his purview. He wanted to see the State restored and its capital rebuilt just as much as the Church and the Temple. Zechariah differed also from Haggai in another way. About

his time the succession of prophets in the accepted sense came to an end. The epoch of prophecy was succeeded by the epoch of apocalypse or symbolism. This was due to the influence of the Captivity. In Babylon the people were removed from the practical responsibilities of national life ; they had ample leisure for indulging in dreams or thought as to what the future might bring forth ; and they were under the influence of Babylonian art. So prophecy gave way to apocalypse—" The representation of God's providence . . . by awful convulsions and catastrophes, both in nature and in politics, in which God Himself appeared, either alone in sudden glory or by the mediation of heavenly armies." (*Twelve Prophets*, Sir George Adam Smith, p. 276.)

In pursuance of this blending of prophecy and apocalyptic symbol in Zechariah, we have a series of eight visions. Some of them seem quite natural, others strange and fantastic. All are original and possess a freshness of colouring and a vividness and movement which lend them life.

The third of these visions pictures the rebuilding of Jerusalem after the Captivity. A man is seen to go forth with a rule in his hand. The prophet asks where he is going. The reply comes that he is going on a town-planning expedition. He is going to measure Jerusalem, to set it out in its length and breadth. His intention is good, but with the impetuosity of youth his zeal has outrun

his discretion. An angel is sent forth to correct him : " Run, speak to this young man, saying, Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein."

The prophet was a man of ideals and of ideas. He conceived a new Jerusalem which was not to be encircled by substantial walls, either for purposes of fortification or of limitation. The prophet was in advance of his time. It mattered not that the city was rebuilt on lines resembling more the old city than the new Jerusalem that Zechariah could see. A new ideal was given to God's people—one whose lessons are not fully learned to-day, in things of wider application than town-planning. The reconstruction of Society, though apparently a quite definite taste, must be planned with the infinite and the eternal in view. Eternal truth must be applied to events of time.

It has been said that by far the strongest blow yet struck at Christianity is the saying of Lessing that " events of time cannot prove eternal truth." This saying of course denies " the claim which the Gospel makes to be a revelation of eternal truth through certain events of time." St. Paul's statement goes right against Lessing's saying, " When the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." (Gal. iv. 4, 5.)

This linking of time and eternity, of finite and infinite, is what we are familiar with in another form, in the linking of our finite earth with infinite space, in the union of body with mind and of flesh with spirit. The expression of eternal truth may take new forms from age to age. The definitions of a former age may not quite satisfy us, yet we shall desire nothing better than to attain that communion with God, to reach that degree of holiness and to achieve those powerful results which marked our spiritual forefathers. There has been a tendency to belittle their achievements and to ignore the range of their sympathies, but their level of excellence forbids us to decry the means by which they rose so high and did so much. It would be wrong for us to forsake the site or the foundations of the old Jerusalem. "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." At the same time if we think to take our measuring line and to trace out the old defences and the old definitions of God's truth, we may make a mistake. We may have the shell without the kernel, or the husk without the wheat.

Zechariah teaches us the right lesson. There must be loyalty to the past blended with a gift of imagination which will see the possibilities of the future. The Jewish exiles imagined that the Jerusalem of the future was simply to reproduce the Jerusalem of the past. The prophet Zechariah

was not one to undervalue the lessons of the past or to overlook its graces and its glories. He saw, however, that we cannot apply our human measurements to God's plan and purpose. He was loyal to the past, but open-minded to the future. He knew how to maintain the material fabric for spiritual ends.

In our civic and national life we have to remember the lessons of Zechariah's vision. At the present time we are constrained to look ahead. We know not what a day or an hour may bring forth. A nation may be destroyed or born in a day. We are passing through a period of reconstruction. Some wish to destroy all traces of the past in their eagerness to work out new plans for the future. This course would be at least as wrong as to aim at the reproduction of a dead past in a living future. There is much in our social and national life of which we ought to be ashamed. If we wish to retain the main features of our social or religious system, we must remember that those features were accompanied by much of which we ought to be ashamed. Surely we can never allow things to be quite the same as they were before, so let us see that those features of our social system which have disgraced us hitherto are swept away. The miseries and the vices which blacken our social life ought to be got rid of. Acres, and even miles, of squalid dwellings in our great cities need to be cleared away. Habits of drunken-

ness and immorality ought to go by the board. There ought to be a living wage for all and readiness to earn it. Extravagance and waste and thriftlessness ought to disappear.

For all this we need Christian inspiration. We need the truths of the old Gospel thought out and applied in terms of the life of to-day. The Gospel of Jesus Christ alone will suggest measures of social reform, but suggestion, or even adoption of such measures will not suffice. There must be a turning to Christ on the part of our great population. We might apply to ourselves other words of Zechariah : " I will pour upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplication ; and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son." Is this impossible ? In John Wesley's day tears streamed down the faces of the miners to whom he preached, and when the proud spirit of the modern man is broken or melted, the same thing may happen again. This will not come until the Church of Christ is broken, touched to the heart by the love of Christ.

There is a convict prison in Ontario on quite new lines. It consists of a farm colony, " inhabited as a town without walls." How different from our convict prisons. Think of the prison at Princetown on Dartmoor—the strong walls defying escape and the armed warders ready to shoot down any wretched

convict in the fields or quarries who attempts to make off. But in the farm colony in Ontario there are convicts working almost without supervision, buildings almost inviting attempts to escape, ample opportunities for correspondence with wife and children, and even for interviews, facilities for recreation and self-improvement, provision of what would seem to us comforts and almost luxuries—all, too, on a basis which makes the place bring in a handsome revenue to the State, and with a result which would be worth losing money for—the reformation of many criminals and their transformation into useful members of Society. If we are to realize in our own land a regeneration of Society, we must not erect walls which may prove to be a barrier against the heathen, but we must throw down many old prejudices and conventions that those who are without may be welcomed into the Kingdom of God.

We have to remember the same lesson in connection with our Church. Some ninety years ago when the foundations of Church and State seemed likely to crumble, several earnest souls sought out a new interpretation of the Church's system. The mistake which Newman and others made was the attempt to reconstruct the mediæval Church. It was no good to attempt to restore the length and breadth of the ancient Jerusalem. Something broader and newer was needed, a conception at once loyal

to the past and open-minded towards the future. We are in danger of making the same mistake again.

There is another application of this lesson which concerns us closely. The Jews were at one time an exclusive nation. When they had learnt the lessons that their isolated national position taught them, the way was open for something wider. God taught the Jews that they were to bring blessings to the Gentiles. When Rome conquered Judæa, she opened the West to Jewish trade. The Jews spread everywhere, and the great age of Jewish missionary work followed. The Church of Israel seemed likely to become a light to lighten the Gentiles. Then came a period of reaction, and in hatred of Romans and other Gentiles the Jews forgot their duty to the world. They longed for a Messiah to break the yoke of Rome and pour out wrath upon the heathen. "A nation which is consumed with hatred for its neighbours is ready for destruction." "No prophet was needed to foresee that the hatred of the Gentile which led them to desecrate the temple . . . must also bring the Gentile to destroy it."

The same call comes to us as came of old to the Jews. God would have us throw open the Church of Christ to all believers. But, alas! numbers of people spring up with their measuring-lines, seeking to narrow down the Church of Christ to the dimensions of days gone by. But the new Jerusalem,

the City of God, is not to be limited thus. "Jerusalem shall be inhabited as towns without walls for the multitude of men and cattle therein." Yes, whether we like it or not, many shall come from the east and from the west and shall sit down in the Kingdom of Heaven, and the danger is lest we, the children of the Kingdom, may be cast out into outer darkness.

If we are to avoid all these pitfalls and to rise to all these opportunities, what manner of men ought we to be? We need to be Greathearts—and great minds too. Dr. Jowett says that he misses the note of vastness in modern preaching. "Towns without walls"—"the multitudes of men and cattle"—the note is sounded in our text. Cecil Rhodes once asked, "What is the use of having great ideas, if you have not the cash to carry them out?" The Church of Christ has at least as good a chance of getting right leaders as the State. We have the ideas, and for every task before the Church, she has the cash if she chooses to spend it. We are all able to do what God asks of us. We have the cash, speaking metaphorically, also. We have the grace, we have the means, we have the men. Why then do we not do more? Why are things not on a vaster scale? Why is there so little progress? Why so scant result? Why are our meetings in aid of Home Missions so thinly attended? Why are our congregations so small? Why do so few value

fellowship with one another and the Death of Christ enough to bring them to the Table of the Lord? Why have so few come forward to help in our work for God? Let us get hold of the ideas, and then draw upon the power to fulfil them—power latent within us, power given us by the Holy Spirit.

We cannot set any limitations to the love of God—we cannot measure its length and breadth, or fathom its depth and height. If there is to be any hint of vastness in our Christian character, we need to use the means of grace in the Church of Christ. Religion is not a mere matter of escaping hell or of getting to heaven, of attending church or of paying subscriptions, it is a renewal of our minds—those minds which are often so paltry, so petty, so narrow, so rigid, so small. We need a renewal of our minds which shall prove what is the acceptable and perfect will of God, a renewal of our minds which will make us modern Zechariahs, inducing in us that vast, that infinite, that loving mind which was also in Christ Jesus.

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